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THESIS

**THE LONG SEARCH FOR DEMOCRATIC
STABILITY IN EL SALVADOR: IMPLICATIONS
FOR UNITED STATES POLICY**

by

Curtis B. Riedel

March, 1997

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**THE LONG SEARCH FOR DEMOCRATIC STABILITY IN EL SALVADOR:
IMPLICATIONS FOR UNITED STATES POLICY**

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B.S., United States Air Force Academy, 1988

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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from the

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March 1997

ABSTRACT

From 1980 to 1992, the United States spent over 6 billion dollars to combat insurgency and bolster democracy in El Salvador, a nation of only 5.3 million people. In fact, El Salvador was the site of the United States' most prolonged - and until the Persian Gulf War - the most costly military endeavor since Vietnam. While United States assistance did help the Salvadoran government combat the insurgents, this aid by most accounts acted to undermine rather than bolster the democratic stability of the country. The thesis examines the democratic experience of El Salvador, as a representative case study of a nation experiencing insurgency, to determine what changes are required in the formation of US foreign policy to help bolster democratic stability in countries challenged by insurgencies.

The thesis makes four key assertions: First, it is in the United States' self-interest to aid in the consolidation of democracy in El Salvador. Second, El Salvador is a nascent democracy, even after the Peace Accords of 1992 were signed, lacking democratic experience or stability, thus requiring US assistance. Third, despite oligarchic resistance, the United States has the ability to successfully influence democratic reform. Fourth, the best way to define United States' priorities for democratic assistance to El Salvador must be through a comprehensive, empirically-based assessment of causal factors.

Utilizing the El Salvador case study and pre-existing theories, the thesis then presents and tests a new empirically-based model for defining US priorities for providing democratic assistance to El Salvador or any other country under consideration. The research could potentially save the United States significant resources and time, while achieving the foreign policy goal of democratic enlargement.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The creation and consolidation of democracy throughout the globe has been an enduring objective of United States foreign policy, whether it was part of the pre-1989 anti-communist strategy or the post-1989 democratic enlargement strategy. The United States has not always been very successful or efficient in achieving this objective as evidenced by the case of El Salvador, where the United States spent over six billion dollars in various forms of assistance from 1980-1992. The assistance did help the Salvadoran government combat the insurgents more effectively, but failed to help El Salvador achieve democratic stability, and instead helped prolong the civil war.

The purpose of this study is to adapt current democratization theories, focusing primarily on the recent empirically-based democratic stability research by Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (DLL), to create a practical, methodological model to prioritize U.S. foreign aid for democratization in El Salvador. DLL's research posited ten primary causal factors associated with democratic stability, which are listed in the table below. However, they did not present a methodology for practically assessing the overall status of democratization or for ranking the variables which are the most obstructing of democratic stability.

This study creates that practical methodology and tests it on the case study of El Salvador. Additionally, lessons learned from this case study are used to refine the model for utilization in future cases. The ability to effectively prioritize U.S. aid through this model will allow the U.S. to more efficiently and effectively achieve foreign policy objectives of

democratization with the diminishing resources available to accomplish them.

Chapter II presents a historical political background of present day El Salvador to help in understanding what forces and constraints currently come into play in this nascent democracy. Chapter III reviews key classics of democratization literature to provide a context and various insights into the study of democratization and some of the foundations for the DLL model. Chapter IV evaluates the DLL theory and its application to the Salvadoran case, including ratings and weightings. Chapter V begins with a review of findings for the specific case study, identifying those factors that are currently supportive and non-supportive of democratic stability in El Salvador, and concludes with an assessment of the applicability of this model on a larger scale.

The study makes four assertions:

- 1) It is in the United States' self-interest to aid in the consolidation of democracy in El Salvador.
- 2) El Salvador did not transition to democracy until after the 1992 Peace Accords. It is a nascent democracy with a considerable lack of democratic experience and in need of developing democratic stability.
- 3) Despite oligarchic resistance, the United States has the ability to positively influence democratic reform as evidenced by past experiences.
- 4) The best way to define priorities for United States' democratic assistance to El Salvador is through a comprehensive, empirically-based assessment of causal factors currently obstructing or favoring development of democratic stability.

The final results of the Salvadoran case are represented in the table below. One of the key discoveries of the research is that in the case of El Salvador, a few variables are the most important in obstructing democratic stability. They are: Social Structures and Socioeconomic

Development; The Military; and Political Institutions. If the United States focuses its resources on removing these key obstacles to democratic stability, it will optimize its efforts.

Independent Variables	Weighted Rating
Social Structures and Socioeconomic Development	-2
The Military	-1
Political Institutions	-.75
Political Culture	0
Political Leadership	.5
Civil Society	.5
State and Society	.5
International Factors	1
Ethnic and Regional Conflict	1
Legitimacy and Performance	1

Table 2. Prioritized List of Targets for United States Assistance to Achieve Maximum Increase in Conditions Favoring Democratic Consolidation in El Salvador (Highest to Lowest)

Having tested the new model in the Salvadoran case study, the study then critiques the model, identifying areas that require additional refinement, along with suggestions on how that can be accomplished.

The results of this study are that it creates a specific recommendation for prioritizing U.S. democratization assistance to El Salvador based on the table above. Additionally, it creates and refines a practical methodology to define U.S. democratization assistance in future cases. The final recommendation is to further refine this new methodology, and adopt it as the method for prioritizing United States foreign assistance linked to countries attempting to bolster democracy.

I. INTRODUCTION

If asked to identify the country of El Salvador on a map, the common American would likely be hard pressed to do so. Yet this smallest of all Latin American countries was the site of the United States' most prolonged - and until the Persian Gulf War - most costly US military endeavor since Vietnam. In fact, over a twelve year period the United States spent over \$6 billion dollars to extinguish leftist insurgency and bolster democracy in this nation of only 5.3 million people, equating to approximately \$1,132.00 (US) for every man, woman, and child in El Salvador. At the time, El Salvador was the showpiece of the Reagan administration's battle against communism and commanded great attention and support from the United States. Yet after twelve years (1980-1992) the insurgents had not been eliminated nor anything beyond a pseudodemocracy had been achieved.¹

Now that the Cold War has ended and the threat of communist subversion in Latin America has disappeared, why should the United States be concerned about democracy in this small nation? First, the United States should support the consolidation of democracy because it has a vested interest to do so. The stability of Latin American nations is important to the United States and remains a primary US foreign policy objective.² Central America is still the geographical southern flank of the United States and US security interests mandate

¹ DOMINGUEZ, Jorge I. and Abraham F. Lowenthal, eds. Constructing Democratic Governance: Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean in the 1990s. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 26.

² ATKINS, G. Pope. Latin America in the International Political System. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), p. 357.

stable regimes on its border regions that cannot be easily manipulated. In the case of El Salvador, the desired political stability is tied to the consolidation of democracy. The twelve years of civil war in El Salvador, from 1980 - 1992, has left a society that is highly polarized despite the apparently democratic electoral process. If the Left and Right poles of the society cannot agree to cooperate politically or at least compete in a democratic framework, the result will be a return to political violence and instability. During the George Bush Administration, the United States confirmed the importance to the United States of consolidating democracies in Latin America as well as throughout the globe under the policy of Democratic Enlargement.

Second, if democracy fails in El Salvador, the resultant political violence and instability could cause a resurgence of the illegal immigration seen during the 1980s civil war. During that period an estimated one million Salvadorans fled to the United States, most illegally, to escape the turmoil. Illegal immigration from Latin America to the United States is already a serious problem without compounding it by a new influx of Salvadorans. Furthermore, Salvadoran instability would greatly increase United States aid requirements for that country to support United States security and stability objectives. Given its mounting budget deficit, the United States cannot afford to continue providing such aid without hurting the United States' own domestic policies.

Third, on the positive side, if the current, fragile democratic political environment can be stabilized, the Salvadoran economy can be strengthened through internal and external investment. This strengthening creates an expanding marketplace for United States goods

and in turn boosts the United States economy. Furthermore, the ability of the United States to maintain a strong, vibrant economic relationship with Latin America is increasingly crucial as former European and Asian markets are slowly shutting to US domination with the formation of European and Asian trading blocks. The new emphasis on United States-Latin American trade evidenced by the North American Free Trade Agreement signals the growing importance this region will have for the United States economy.

Fourth, El Salvador's political situation is not unique in Central America. Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua are neighbors which share El Salvador's problems of trying to consolidate democracy after insurgencies and political repression by the elite. If democracy can be consolidated in El Salvador, it will stand as an example and encouragement to other nations in Central America and the Caribbean, which face similar democratization obstacles.

Consolidating El Salvador's democracy is important to achieve the United States desired stability in the region. It will serve as an example to other Central American countries as well as providing expanding markets for United States products, decreasing the risk of widespread illegal immigration from El Salvador to the United States, and decreasing the need for increased United States aid to El Salvador. The foundation of future democratic consolidation in El Salvador lies in first achieving democratic stability. Democratic stability allows sufficient time for democratic principles to take root and gain legitimacy in a country thus opening the door for democracy to become the cultural norm.

The purpose of this study then is to answer the question: how can the United States most effectively bolster the democratic stability of El Salvador? It relies on four fundamental assertions addressed throughout the paper. These four assertions are:

- 1) It is in the United States' self-interest to aid in the consolidation of democracy in El Salvador.
- 2) El Salvador did not transition to democracy until after the 1992 Peace Accords. It is a nascent democracy with a considerable lack of democratic experience and in need of developing democratic stability.
- 3) Despite oligarchic resistance, the United States has the ability to positively influence democratic reform as evidenced by past experiences.
- 4) The best way to define priorities for United States' democratic assistance to El Salvador is through a comprehensive, empirically-based assessment of causal factors currently obstructing or favoring development of democratic stability.

The dependent variable of this study is democratic stability which therefore requires a definition of democracy and stability. When considering democracy within El Salvador, the paper is concerned with the political system separate from the economic and social systems. Lying somewhere between a procedural/electoral definition and a substantive definition of democracy, the definition employed here focuses on a system of government that meets five essential conditions:

- 1) Meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organized groups (especially political parties) for all effective positions of government power through regular, free, and fair elections that exclude the use of force.
- 2) A highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, such that no major adult social group is prevented from exercising the rights of citizenship.

3) A level of civil and political liberties -- freedom of thought and expression, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and demonstration, freedom to form and join organizations, freedom from terror and unjustified imprisonment -- secured through political equality under a rule of law, sufficient to ensure that citizens, individually or through associations, can develop and advocate their views and interests and contest policies and offices vigorously and autonomously.

4) Rulers can and will be held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens and their representatives.

5) Multiple channels exist for the representation of citizen interests beyond the formal political frameworks of parties, parliaments, and elections.

Stability is defined as the ability for the democratic regime, as defined above, to persist over time, particularly through periods of unusually intense conflict, crisis, and strain.³ It is important to clarify that both aspects of this variable, “democratic” and “stability”, must be satisfied to meet the definition of the variable. A government that is democratic in procedure yet has not gain an adequate foundation to withstand conflict without losing its democratic nature, nor a stable government which is not democratic does not met the definition of this variable.

In order for the United States to help achieve this democratic stability, it must do so through factors which have a causal effect on the dependent variable of democratic stability. Therefore, the independent variables of this study are the factors that are conducive to democratic stability. Fortunately, the groundwork for this type of research has already been laid by Larry Diamond, Juan Linz and Seymour Martin Lipset (hereafter referred to as DLL) in their 1989 book, Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with

³ DIAMOND, Larry, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset. Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), p. 7.

Democracy. As will be explained in detail in Chapter IV, this highly respected work lays out ten factors and eight sub-factors conducive to the development of stable democracy in developing countries based on a 26-country empirical study, one of the largest-scale studies to date. These ten factors are the independent variables of this study. While only one of these factors can be deemed a necessary condition and none are sufficient conditions, they all have demonstrated causal effect on the independent variable of democratic stability in developing countries. Despite the theoretical insight of the DLL theory, it does have some drawbacks for practical application. There is no manner to rate and weight the independent variables in order to compare them and arrive at a net cumulative effect of a country's democratic development. Additionally, the authors do not acknowledge that certain factors empirically demonstrate a greater impact on the development of democratization than others. Consequently, the author of this study has slightly modified the DLL model to provide both a rating and weighting factor.

The methodology of this study then is to use the DLL independent variables in a single case study of El Salvador to assess the current status of factors for democratic stability in that country. This assessment will identify those independent variables in El Salvador that are obstructing democratic development and stability, thus establishing appropriate, relevant targets for United States assistance.

In Chapter II, the study will first present a historical political background of present day El Salvador to help in understanding what forces and constraints currently come into play in this nascent democracy. The following chapter will review key classics of

democratization literature to provide a context and various insights into the study of democratization and some of the foundations for the DLL model. An evaluation of the DLL theory and its application to the Salvadoran case, including ratings and weightings, will be presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V begins with a review of findings for the specific case study, identifying those factors that are currently supportive and non-supportive of democratic stability in El Salvador, and concludes with an assessment of the applicability of this model on a larger scale.

II. HISTORICAL POLITICAL BACKGROUND

By understanding El Salvador's political history, there is a better understanding of the factors which operate in and/or constrain the country's current political environment. Therefore, this chapter will examine El Salvador's political history pre- and post- 1992 to determine the historical political influences up through and after the civil war from 1980-1992. By so doing, it becomes clear the oligarchical nature of Salvadoran society has created a hostile environment for democratic reform which presents certain case-specific obstacles to democratic stability. Historically, the overwhelming power in El Salvador has been concentrated in two groups, the oligarchy and the military. Even during the facades of democracy erected by the constitutions and the elections, these groups have maintained de facto power over El Salvador. This has been possible because political competition occurred only among elite groups and the military has assumed the responsibility of repressing virtually all dissatisfaction on the part of the masses and reinforcing the interests of the elites. This repression has at times been brutal and total, especially before the 1992 Peace Accords, but it has also been selective so as not to alienate the moderate members of the middle class and further narrow support for the regime.

A. PRE-1992

In 1931, popular uprisings in El Salvador grew out of the frustrated hopes and the misery of the Depression-induced economic crisis. The collapse of the world coffee market meant reformist President Arturo Araujo could not deliver on his promises of social benefits.

The armed forces under General Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez and local vigilante bands under local oligarchs moved to crush popular unrest and incipient revolutionary organizing. The result was the infamous *matanza* (massacre) of 1932 in which as many as 30,000 Salvadorans died. So great was the slaughter that to this day the incident is known as simply “la matanza” (“the massacre”) in El Salvador. This episode also ended any immediate hopes for reform as General Hernandez assumed and concentrated power into his repressive regime, which lasted for twelve years. This was the beginning of a long legacy of military rule.

In May 1944, as the end of World War II spread the epidemic hope for democracy across the globe and dissatisfaction with Hernandez’s government exploded, a national strike supported by military dissidents overthrew Hernandez Martinez. Over the next four years, three military coups kept the government in constant upheaval. The leader of the 1948 coup, Major Carlos Osorio, held power until 1956 when power was transferred to Lt Col Jose Maria Lemus. In October 1960, Lemus was ousted in another military coup. For the next twenty months El Salvador was governed by a six-man junta, followed by a self-described Civilian-Military Directorate, then a brief stint of civilian leadership as Rodolfo Eusebio Cordon was appointed provisional President for six months. In July 1962, elections placed Salvadoran Army Lt Col Julio Rivera in office for five years until General Fidel Sanchez Hernandez won the next election.⁴

⁴ BARRY, Tom. El Salvador: A Country Guide. (Albuquerque: The Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center, 1991), pp. 12-15.

For the 1972 election, the military government began allowing increased participation in elections for outside groups. To the military's surprise, the Christian Democratic candidate, Jose Napoleon Duarte, won the election. However, the military used their control over the electoral process to fraudulently award the election to one of their own, Col Arturo Molina. The 1977 election also fraudulently awarded the presidency to a military officer, General Humberto Romero. General Romero's regime was marked by brutal repression and a clear lack of respect for any form of human rights. The blatant corruption and repression seriously undermined the legitimacy of the Salvadoran government.

The fact military members were awarded the presidency whether or not they won the election demonstrates the institutionalized nature of elite leadership which has characterized El Salvador for most of the twentieth century. The military maintained power through a cyclical pattern. Each incoming military leader would enter office as a progressive, vowing to help the plight of the masses and attempting some moderate social legislation to bolster legitimacy. However, any support for the masses threatened the predominance of the oligarchy who held a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Consequently any reform was met with oligarchic resistance, which limited the effectiveness of any proposed changes. As the masses became frustrated and acted out against the lack of change, the military would step in and repress the discontent. The resultant decline in legitimacy necessitated a new military "progressive" leader come to power. This leader would then promise reform once

again to appease the masses and start the cycle all over again. However, the coup of 1979 broke this cycle.⁵

The 1970s saw a rise in increasingly militant and radical popular organizations developing alongside an incipient radical leftist revolutionary movement in El Salvador. Capitalizing on the discontent of the masses, these revolutionary groups sought armed rebellion against the government. They initiated guerrilla attacks against the government. Unable to stop the attacks themselves, the armed forces under General Romero and the threatened oligarchs turned to right-wing vigilante death squads to suppress the insurgency. They indiscriminately murdered suspected rebels, guerrillas, and dissidents.

At the same time, the repressive and corrupt government of Anastasio Somoza, similar to Romero's, had just been overthrown by leftists in neighboring Nicaragua. Fearing a similar fate for El Salvador, a group of young military officers organized a reformist coup that overthrew General Romero and brought to power a reform-minded military-civilian junta. The junta included two military officers and three civilians. However, real power remained in the hands of the hard-line forces in the military under the control of Defense Minister Jose Garcia. The hard-liners, acting in their traditional role as protectors of the elites, countered the attempts to introduce social reforms, to restore respect for human rights, and especially countered attempts to bring to justice those engaged in the brutal repression during the Romero regime. Within a year, the civilian members resigned from the ineffectual junta citing a lack on the part of the military to recognize civilian control and to

⁵ BARRY, pp. 12-15.

end the slaughter of the popular movement. The civilians were replaced with members of the less progressive Christian Democratic (CD) party to form a second junta. Despite the inclusion of more conservative CD members, the military still considered the junta too reform-minded and a coup was planned but averted after vigorous United States diplomatic intervention.⁶

The repression and scourge of death squad killings that caused the first junta to resign deepened under the second junta. This junta also proved incapable of affecting reform. As the civil war grew and pressure for reform mounted from within El Salvador and from without, the military was pushed into having some form of civilian elections. In May 1982, Constituent Assembly elections signaled the transfer from military to civilian rule as Alvaro Magana was elected provisional president. A constitution was signed December 20, 1983 institutionalizing constitutional government by elected civilian authorities. In 1984, the Christian Democrat candidate, Jose Napoleon Duarte, became the first elected civilian President under the new constitution.

The above analysis leads to the following assertion, *Assertion #2: El Salvador did not transition to democracy until after the 1992 Peace Accords. The 1983 constitution provided for procedural democracy but the lack of freedom and participation made for a pseudodemocracy, a democratic facade, not the real thing. El Salvador is a nascent democracy with a considerable lack of democratic experience.* As was just discussed, from

⁶ HAGGERTY, Richard A. El Salvador: A Country Study. (Washington D.C.: Federal Research Division, 1990), pp. 1-45.

1930-1984 El Salvador had been ruled almost continually by repressive military. After 1984, the military still retained control of the country only now it hid behind a democratic facade of fraudulent, non-popular elections. Using the five criteria for democracy presented in the definition section of the paper, it is clear, despite claims to the contrary, El Salvador did not transition to democracy until after the cease-fire and reforms of the 1992 Peace Accord. From 1982 until 1992, under the umbrella of fighting the civil war, the military continued to assassinate individuals it felt were a threat to their interests. On the other side of the political spectrum, in 1980, five Salvadoran leftist-revolutionary groups met in Havana, Cuba, under the auspices of Fidel Castro to form a united front. The new unified group became the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) or Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front. This group was dedicated to the overthrow of the Salvadoran government. Consequently, they could not register for the elections nor would they support or participate in them. What ensued was a violent twelve-year civil war (1980-1992) in which both sides used massive violence in an attempt to eliminate the other. Due to the civil war and the violent persecution, plus repression of the political left, there was only limited political participation in contestation of national leadership positions. The military and government-sponsored death squads assassinated political opposition, thereby effectively terminating the freedom of expression, open organization, and association. The impunity with which the government and its agents violated the constitution and laws indicate the overwhelming lack of government accountability to the people. Therefore, before 1992 El Salvador remained deficient in several criteria of democracy.

B. POST-1992

Neither the military nor the insurgents proved capable of defeating the other and a stalemate developed. In January 1992, after a loss of operational support for both sides from external actors and due to increasing pressure from the United States to end the fighting, both sides grudgingly signed the Peace Accords of El Salvador. In so doing the Salvadoran government and the FMLN reaffirmed “. . . to end the armed conflict through means of political negotiations at the shortest time possible; promote the democratization of the country; guarantee unrestricted human rights; and reunite the Salvadoran society.”⁷

The United Nations sent a UN Observer Mission to El Salvador to help preside over and assist the implementation of the accords. This Mission became invaluable in arbitrating disputes over details of the peace process which were substantial. The final result was the successful conclusion to the civil war. The FMLN registered as a political party to compete for political power electorally. For the most part, political participation and civil freedom has been extended across Salvadoran society sufficient to meet the criteria of being a democracy. However, Salvadoran society remained largely polarized and the military retained much of its previous power.

In the period leading up to the March 1994 elections, attention focused on achieving full compliance with remaining Peace Accord obligations and assuring a fair election. The obligations from the peace accord focused on overcoming delays in reforming the previously

⁷ BLANDON, Francisco A. *El Salvador: An Example For Conflict Resolution (Master's Thesis)*. (Monterey: United States Naval Postgraduate School, 1995), p. 37. For a full discussion of the 1992 Salvadoran Peace Accords, this work is a useful reference.

repressive Salvadoran police forces into new organizations, increasing judicial effectiveness, and providing land and training to former combatants on both sides. The land and training was necessary to help productively reintegrate the former combatants into society. For the elections, efforts concentrated on increasing voter registration and participation in the elections and eliminating threats to the freedom of expression and debate. The murders of two FMLN leaders and three Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA), a Salvadoran political party, members at this time generated concern over possible reemergence of death squad activity. The United Nations and the United States pressured the Salvadoran government to create a “Joint Group” of distinguished citizens to investigate these killings. This group and the United Nations Truth Commission, which was created to investigate the most serious human rights abuses, reflected a new era of attempts to hold the government accountable for their actions.

The March 1994 elections in El Salvador were a key step in the peace process and on the path to democratic stability. This was the first elections in which the former FMLN guerillas were included. The elections were held in an atmosphere of peace and despite numerous administrative problems, most observers judged the election to be fair. In the first round, the (ARENA) candidate, Armando Calderon Sol won 49% of the vote and the leftist coalition of the FMLN and the Democratic Convergence (CD) placed second with 24.9% of the vote. Given that there was no majority, a second round was held between ARENA and the FMLN coalition, in which Calderon Sol won with 68.2% of the vote. ARENA also won 39 out of the 84 legislative seats. ARENA’s cooperative ties with the Christian Democratic

party, which has 18 seats, assures ARENA control of the legislature as well as the presidency. The next legislative elections are scheduled for 1997 and the next presidential election will be in 1999.

The post-1992 democratic development in El Salvador is solidifying more concretely than any other previous attempt at establishing democracy in that country. While there are still sporadic reports of minimal political violence, there is no longer wide-spread, coordinated acts of oligarchical sponsored violence. Furthermore, political opposition parties are in fact finding an environment in which they can function as evidenced by the fairly successful FMLN and Democratic Convergence participation in the 1994 elections. Nonetheless, the power in El Salvador, whether it be political, economic, or military, still rests in the hands of the oligarchs, who wield considerable control over all aspects of the country. In regards to the five criteria of democracy, El Salvador has transitioned from 1931 when it met none of the criteria, to the current state of meeting most criteria in a general way, but lacking truly free, non-oligarchy persuaded political outcomes.

III. REVIEW OF THEORETICAL LITERATURE

Before assessing the DLL model, it is worthwhile to review the democratization literature to elicit from it the strengths and weaknesses of previous studies as well as the academic context of this study. There has been a plethora of literature written about democratization starting as far back as Seymour Martin Lipset's 1959 work entitled Political Man which posited a relationship between a country's economic development and democratization. This chapter examines several key classics of democratization theory as well as one El Salvador specific study as building blocks for this study. By taking the best aspects of previous theories, an even stronger follow-on can be created.

A. DAHL'S POLYARCHY

Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition was published in 1971 and set out to examine the conditions under which systems of public contestation are likely to develop and exist. For Dahl, the characteristic of democracy is the quality of being completely or almost completely responsive to all of its citizens. In order for governments to achieve this, all full citizens must have three unimpaired opportunities. The first is to formulate their preferences. The second is to signify their preferences to fellow citizens and the government by individual and collective action. The final opportunity is to have their preferences weighted equally.⁸ These three conditions are considered necessary but not sufficient conditions for a

⁸ DAHL, Robert A. Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 2.

democracy. In order for these opportunities/conditions to exist among a large number of people, Dahl assumes at least eight guarantees must exist:

1. Freedom to form and join organizations
2. Freedom of expression
3. Right to vote
4. Eligibility for public office
5. Right of political leaders to compete for support
 - 5a. Right of political leaders to compete for votes
6. Alternative sources of information
7. Free and fair elections
8. Institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference

These conditions can vary in the extent to which they are fulfilled and Dahl interprets them as constituting two different theoretical dimensions of democratization: public contestation and the right to participate.⁹

Dahl plots the variables of public contestation and the right to participate on a standard x,y axis. Democracy then lies on the upper, right hand corner constituting full opportunity for contestation and participation. However, in Dahl's assessment no real world, large system is fully democratized so he uses the term polyarchy to discuss real world systems. Polyarchies are relatively although not completely democratized regimes. They are highly inclusive and extensively open to public contestation. Dahl then explores seven sets of conditions, which equate to his independent variables, and their relationship to significantly increasing the chances of public contestation and polyarchy. Those seven are

⁹ Dahl, p. 3.

historical sequences, the degree of concentration in the socioeconomic order, level of socioeconomic development, inequality, sub-cultural cleavages, foreign control, and the beliefs of political activists. A full explanation of this posited relationship is provided in Dahl's book.¹⁰

The insights of Dahl's work are significant. Through his logico-empirical approach, Dahl acknowledges there are multiple components which compose democracy. He asserts the various combinations of political participation and opposition create different levels of democracy. Full democracy only exists in one absolute form. All other democratically based regimes exist on a scale in which countries can be more, equally, or less democratic than preceding regimes or other countries. Additionally, he makes the assertion there are certain conditions that influence this degree of democratization in a country. While these conditions are not absolute, changes in their values equate to a change in the level of democracy. Dahl concludes there is a form of democratization pseudo-calculus whereby the extent to which his seven variables are met can be quantified; those results are then mathematically manipulated resulting in an overall measurement of a country's democracy level which can be compared with other countries. One drawback to Dahl's work is the fact it lacked the opportunity to empirically examine and incorporate the tide of democratization that swept the globe after Portugal's democratization in 1974.

¹⁰ Dahl provides an excellent summary table of these seven variables and their conditions which favor polyarchy on p. 203 of his book.

B. HUNTINGTON'S THIRD WAVE

In 1974, a surge of democratization swept the globe transforming numerous previously non-democratic regimes into some form of a democracy. Samuel P. Huntington refers to this surge as the third wave of democratization and uses it as a critical point of analysis in his 1991 book The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century.¹¹ Departing from his earlier theoretical works, Huntington takes a lengthy, semi-theoretical/semi-historical approach in an effort to explain why, how, and with what immediate consequences the third wave of democratization occurred between 1974 and 1990. Huntington adopted Dahl's procedural definition of democracy with some qualifications, focusing on contestation and participation. He also emphasized the existence of civil and political freedoms to speak, publish, assemble, and organize that are necessary to political debate and the conduct of political campaigns.

Huntington asserts that historically democratization in the modern world has largely taken place in waves. A wave is "a group of transitions from non-democratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that same time period."¹² A reverse wave is a net decrease of democratic regimes that occur over a time period following a wave of democratization. The first wave of democratization was a long one lasting from 1828 - 1926.

¹¹ HUNTINGTON, Samuel P. The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

¹² Huntington, p. 15.

This was followed from 1922 - 1942 with the first reverse wave. A second short wave of democratization lasted from 1943 - 1962. It was followed by a reverse wave from 1958 - 1975. The third wave began in 1974 and continues to the present.¹³

In analyzing the third wave, which El Salvador was a part of, Huntington identifies five plausible changes which occurred in the 1960s and 1970s which seem to have played a significant role in bringing about the third wave transitions.¹⁴ They are:

- 1) The deepening legitimacy problems of authoritarian systems in a world where democratic values were widely accepted. The dependence of those regimes on performance legitimacy, and the undermining of that legitimacy by military defeats, economic failures, and the oil shocks of 1973 - 1974.
- 2) the unprecedented global economic growth of the 1960s, which raised living standards, increased education, and greatly expanded the urban middle class in many countries.
- 3) the striking changes in the doctrine and activities of the Catholic Church manifested in Second Vatican Council in 1963 - 1965 and the transformation of national churches from defenders of the status quo to opponents of authoritarianism and proponents of social, economic, and political reforms.
- 4) changes in the policies of external actors, including in the late 1960s the new attitude of the European community toward expanding its membership; the major shift in United States policies beginning in 1974 toward the promotion of human rights and democracies in other countries; and Gorbachev's dramatic change in the late 1980s in Soviet policy toward maintaining the Soviet empire.
- 5) The "snowballing" or demonstration effects, enhanced by new means of international communication, of the first transitions to democracy in the third wave in stimulating and providing models for subsequent efforts at regime changes in other countries.

¹³ Huntington, pp. 16-21.

¹⁴ Huntington, pp. 45-46.

A key point of this work is that democratizations of the Third Wave differed from previous waves. He cites event specific causes for the third wave and asserts each wave has its own specific causes. In reviewing the multiplicity of democratization theories and the diversity of democratization experiences, Huntington asserts six probable propositions which go against the mainstream of democratization theory searching for one or limited variables to consistently explain democratization.¹⁵ Those propositions are:

- 1) no single factor is sufficient to explain the development of democracy in all countries or in a single country.
- 2) No single factor is necessary to the development of democracy in all countries.
- 3) Democratization in each country is a result of a combination of causes.
- 4) The combination of causes producing democracy varies from country to country.
- 5) The combination of causes generally responsible for one wave of democratization differs from those responsible for other waves.
- 6) The causes responsible for the initial regime changes in a democratization wave are likely to differ from those responsible for later regime changes.

While these assertions may provide some insight why El Salvador transitioned from an authoritarian regime to a procedural democracy, they provide little insight on factors which strengthen the development of democracy after the democratic transition has occurred. Huntington still makes a twofold contribution. First, he delineates possible problems to consider for democratic stability. Second, he offers some tentative, hypothesized factors that encourage the consolidation of democracy. As for the problems, he identifies two pre-

¹⁵ Huntington, p. 38.

consolidation types of problems, transition problems and contextual problems. Transition problems stem directly from the phenomenon of regime change from authoritarianism to democracy. These include establishing constitutional and electoral systems, as well as doing away with old-authoritarian agencies and police. Two key transition problems in many countries concern what to do with those who committed human rights abuses under the previous regime and how to establish civilian control over the military if it is lacking. Contextual problems stem from the nature of the society including its economy, culture, and history.¹⁶

As for factors encouraging the consolidation of democracy in the third wave, Huntington concludes it is too early as of 1990 to make any definitive predictions. Based on the first and second waves, Huntington extrapolates that factors favorable to inaugurating democracy may not promote its consolidation. However, Huntington does posit several factors, such as prior democratic experience; a high level of economic development; an international environment and foreign actors supportive of democracy; and the earlier a country transitioned within the third wave, which appear to be more conducive to consolidating democracy.¹⁷

Insights of Huntington's work is that there are multiple factors which may contribute to democratization and that each case can and probably has a unique combination of those factors. He argues against Dahl's concept of measurable democracy. While Huntington's

¹⁶ Huntington, p. 209.

¹⁷ Huntington, pp. 270-279.

book is very good at laying out the specific cause of the third wave, his insight on what factors contribute to consolidating democracy is relatively lacking. Both Dahl and Huntington concentrate on the transition from an authoritarian or hegemonic regime to a democracy.

C. SCHMITTER'S REFLECTIONS ON CONSOLIDOLOGY

One author filling the void of consolidation theory is Phillipe C. Schmitter. In a chapter for the 1995 book The Consolidation of Democracy in Latin America,¹⁸ he clarifies the fact that democratic transitions and democratic consolidations are two distinct sub-disciplines of democracy studies. Schmitter asserts the enabling conditions which were most conducive to reducing and mastering the uncertainty of the transition may turn into the confining conditions that make consolidation more difficult. Furthermore, the study of consolidation, or consolidology, is in the embryonic stage. Nonetheless, Schmitter offers nine generic reflections about consolidology which may constitute a foundation for this new pseudoscience as he terms it. It is important to remember that these are thoughts for consideration being asserted by Schmitter, not theories at this point. They nevertheless provide worthwhile points to keep in mind for this assessment.

Schmitter's Nine Reflections:

- 1) Democracy is not inevitable and it is revocable. Democracy is not necessary; it does not fulfill a functional requisite for capitalism, nor does it

¹⁸ TULCHIN, Joseph S. and Bernice Romero, editors. The Consolidation of Democracy in Latin America. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995.

respond to some ethical imperative of social evolution. Hence its consolidation requires a continuous and extraordinary effort.

2) Transitions from autocratic or authoritarian regimes can lead to diverse outcomes. Consolidated democracy is not the automatic outcome. States can regress to autocracies, form hybrid democracies, or form unconsolidated democracies.

3) It is not democracy that is being consolidated, but one or another type of democracy. There are different forms democracy can take. What is important is that they met the criteria of contingent consent between the politicians and the citizens.

4) The type of democracy will depend significantly (but not exclusively) on the mode of transition from autocracy. No specific guideline is given for what transitions lead to what types of consolidation. Instead, the point being made is the way a country transitions will likely constrain later options available for consolidation thereby defining what type of consolidation occurs.

5) Each type of democracy has a distinctive way of consolidating itself, especially as to its own rhythm sequence; no single path to consolidation is a guarantee for future stability or viability of all types of democracy.

6) At this time in history, almost without exception democracy of one type or another is the only legitimate form of political domination.

7) Transitions to democracy rarely happen in isolation, that is, without the simultaneous presence of other demands and other processes of profound change in socioeconomic structures and cultural values.

8) Democracies tend to emerge “in waves.” Although this is not attributed to Huntington, it is a repetition of his wave concept of democracies.

9) It is possible, but not necessarily easy, to move from various types of autocracy to various types of democracy without respecting the preconditions or prerequisites long considered to be indispensable by political scientists.¹⁹

¹⁹ TULCHIN, Chap 5.

Although Schmitter's reflections sometimes seem to cover both democratic transitions and consolidations, in general he paints democratic consolidation as a dynamic, almost living process. Consolidation is something which must grow rather than being an automatic outcome. More importantly, democracy is environment dependent. It can arise from many different situations and take many courses. In the end, the result may also vary, resulting in a less than consolidated democracy or even a return to autocracy. One insight from the perspective of democracy as a dynamic process is it is susceptible to prodding and guiding from various sources but none of these sources is determinative.

D. SCHWARZ'S ASSESSMENT OF OBSTACLES TO SALVADORAN DEMOCRACY

Bridging the gap from the generic democratization theory to specific theories on El Salvador's democratization is the 1991 RAND publication American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador: The Frustrations of Reform and the Illusion of Nation Building by Benjamin Schwarz.²⁰ The focus of Schwarz's work is to understand why America's original efforts to stabilize and end the insurgency in El Salvador failed. The United States found the 1980s El Salvador an ideal place for testing new counterinsurgency doctrine learned from the Vietnam Conflict. This new approach consisted of a two-pronged policy as stated in the 1984 Kissinger Commission Report: bolster the El Salvadoran Armed Forces so they could militarily defeat the rebels and strengthen democracy in El Salvador so as to weaken the rebels' claim to political legitimacy. Its essence was a hearts-and-mind

²⁰ SCHWARZ, Benjamin C. American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador: The Frustration of Reform and the Illusion of Nation Building. Santa Monica: RAND, 1991.

campaign combined with military defeats of the insurgents. The 12-year civil war which culminated with a negotiated cease-fire, not victory, shows that the military victory prong of the policy did not succeed.

The democratization portion of the policy focused on accomplishing three goals: reform of the Salvadoran Armed Forces, land redistribution, and democratization. Schwarz shows that at the time of his book (1991), the democratization prong also failed as the Salvadoran military was not reformed, the initial attempts at land redistribution were effectively stifled by the oligarchy, and the Left was not participating in the electoral process, so democracy was far from present.

Schwarz's theory on why America could not implement this policy was not because of a failure on America's part. Instead, the problem rested in the entrenched authoritarian culture, economic structure, and political practices of El Salvador. The polarization of the society through civil war had eroded the "political space" where each side could come together without total mistrust to work on the social and political consensus necessary for democracy. Most importantly, the El Salvadoran elites who controlled the politics, economy, and power of the country consistently blocked the reforms necessary to bolster democracy because they went against the elites own prerogatives vested in the status quo. Although the overt insurgency in El Salvador ended with the 1992 Peace Accords, Schwarz's theory about American efforts to bolster democracy should still be relevant for the present situation. America can not consolidate democracy and stabilize El Salvador until the elites are removed from their omnipotent control of society and self-interests.

No matter how relevant Schwarz's theories still are, a key assertion of this paper is that his theory, although insightful, is misguided. *Assertion #3: Despite oligarchic resistance, the United States has the ability to positively influence democratic reform as evidenced by past experiences.* The extent of American influence/coercion over Salvadoran elites has been demonstrated numerous times. In 1989, when six Jesuit priests were killed by rightist Salvadoran death squads, it was United States economic and diplomatic pressure which resulted in the military killers being brought to trial. The arrest and trial of military members was unfathomable at the time and went directly against the military's prerogative. However, the Salvadoran military acceded to United States influence. In 1992, the Salvadoran military was strongly opposed to any peace agreement with the left, favoring all out defeat of the insurgents. Again it was United States pressure which led to military acquiescence and Rightist cooperation for the agreement. The United States also has demonstrated its willingness to use military force or the threat of military force twice within the last six years to return democracy to Panama and Haiti. The threat of United States use of force to maintain democracy in Latin America carries a credibility in the 1990s that anti-democratic Latin American militaries and forces must consider.

El Salvador has been a traditional client state of the United States. The country has historically relied on the United States for support with its numerous economic and political problems. El Salvador still presently requests money through the United States Agency for International Development to deal with these problems. However, in 1996 there is a large difference in this relationship than before 1990. Similar to all other countries in Latin

America, the United States has always given aid to El Salvador conditionally. “We’ll give you money but you have to do x, y, and z for it.” Before the end of the Cold War, El Salvador was a key battle of America’s Cold War against communism and Leftists in Latin America. Consequently, El Salvador knew it could do whatever it wanted and still continue to get the aid because the United States would not allow it to fall to the leftist insurgents. The communist trump card has vanished for El Salvador and the moderately complex interdependence in United States - Salvadoran relations is gone along with it. Conditional United States support of El Salvador coupled with a pro-democratic international environment will provide an adequate opportunity to achieve reform in El Salvador. However, the entrenched, resistant nature of elitist power distribution pointed out by Schwarz will make it a difficult and likely slow transformation.

In order to be effective therefore, the consolidation efforts of the United States must be focused and well targeted. The obvious key is to target support on those areas that are obstacles to democratic consolidation so as not to waste political capital and back the elite dominated government into a defensive posture. Previous policies of throwing money or aid at the problem and hoping it would trickle down to the requisite areas is simply not effectual. This was demonstrated by the twelve year, six billion dollars debacle of the 1980s.

Even though each of the previously discussed theories is lacking in some form the ability to effectively evaluate and predict democratic stability, their insights are still beneficial in building a more effective model for working with democratic stability. Dahl contributes the concept that democracy is composed of multiple components such as the

ability to formulate ideas as well as the freedom to express them. Furthermore, he identifies that polyarchy can exist at varying levels, some more democratic than others, which can be measured, albeit in rather arbitrary way. Huntington sheds light on the concept that democracy is the result of multiple factors which can interact in unique ways to produce democracy. Huntington also addresses the importance of external factors in the democratization of a country. Schmitter identifies the consolidation of democracy as a specific process within democratization which must be understood as dynamic and environment dependent. Like Huntington, Schmitter emphasizes the multi-path nature of democracy and consolidation.

These previous works will be built upon in Chapter IV in order to model a new approach to evaluating the stabilization of democracy in developing countries. This approach recognizes democratic stabilization as a multi-faceted, multi-avenued, and dynamic process.

IV. EVALUATION AND APPLICATION OF THE DLL THEORY

As mentioned in Chapter III, there have been numerous studies conducted on democratization, some very insightful. However, these studies (e.g. Dahl and Huntington), have mostly focused on the transitions from authoritarian regimes to democracy. This focus limits their applicability once the regime has “transitioned” however that may be defined. One current model, the Diamond, Linz, and Lipset model (DLL model) intentionally set out to overcome that shortcoming and understand what factors stand as conductors or obstacles to the development of democratic stability. Unlike most other studies, it makes the very important distinction of positing democratic stability as the dependent variable. Furthermore, this study concentrated on democratization in the distinct cases of developing countries, such as El Salvador.

Another major strength the DLL model has over other models is the breadth of perspective from which it drew upon in its formulation. First, the model’s originators are three individually renowned experts in the study of democratization. Seymour Martin Lipset wrote one of the earlier democratization works, Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics,²¹ published in 1960, in which he posited a relationship between economic development and democratization. As one of the pioneers of democratization research, he has studied the phenomenon extensively over many years. Likewise, Juan J. Linz and Larry Diamond have

²¹ LIPSET, Seymour M. Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics. Garden City: Doubleday, 1960.

spent an enormous amount of their distinguished careers studying democratization. Diamond has authored many noted works on various aspects of democratization and Linz, along with Alfred Stepan, edited the highly acclaimed four volume series on democratization, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes²². In their model, Diamond, Linz, and Lipset provide valuable insights which are the product of extensive collaboration.

Second, the model is based on a wide foundation of approaches. In formulating their model, the authors heavily drew upon previous works. The DLL model does not reflect a completely new approach, but rather a refinement and modification of the finest aspects of previous works. The 158 diversely-sourced footnotes for their 57 page introduction evidences this. For example, Diamond Linz and Lipset reference Dahl's concept of polyarchy, which helps in our understanding of various levels of democracy. Dahl also provided a matrix to test how certain factors influence democratization. Diamond, Linz, and Lipset also acknowledge Huntington's insight that there is no absolute path to

²² LINZ, Juan J. and Alfred Stepan. The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1991. This is the fourth publishing of this work which was originally published in 1978. Volume I, entitled Crisis, Breakdown, & Reequilibration examines how democracies breakdown by studying the elements of democratic breakdown, the process of that breakdown, what happens when democracy ends, and how democracy reequilibrates after it is severely challenged but survives. Volumes II, III, and IV examine the breakdown of democracy in Europe, Latin America, and Chile specifically. Much of Linz's insight into democratic process in this work is reflected in his later collaboration on the Diamond, Linz, and Lipset model and therefore is not specifically addressed in this paper. One of the major contributions of Linz in Volume I is the definition of different types of opposition to the democratic government. First there is loyal opposition wherein a democratic government enjoys legitimacy even among those who constitute the opposition. The opposition scores highly on ten characteristics of an opposition which is committed to working within the current system to affect change. (pp. 16 & 36) Second there is semi-loyal opposition wherein the opposition has mixed scores on the ten characteristics but is still committed to working within the system when the democratic government is not heavily challenged. Finally, the third type of opposition is disloyal which views the democratic government as illegitimate, and as such scores low on the ten characteristics and commitment to work within the established system.

democratization and factors can have different levels of impact in individual cases. More importantly, the DLL model is based on an all inclusive approach to understanding the outcome. Building on Dahl's logic-based theory and Huntington's historical/empirical theory, Diamond Linz and Lipset used a twenty six country empirical study to further refine these theories resulting in an encompassing approach based on logic, history, and empirical evidence. Therefore, the DLL model is well suited to analyze the Salvadoran situation, a developing country, which has achieved procedural democracy after the 1992 peace accords, but has yet to experience the successful, smooth transfer of regime power between opposing parties.

Despite the theoretical insight of the DLL theory, it does have some drawbacks for practical application. There is no attempt to rate or rank the independent variables in order to assess their individual or cumulative effect on a country's democratic development. Additionally, the authors do not acknowledge that certain factors empirically demonstrate a greater impact on the development of democratization than others. While these omissions were most likely intentional to avoid creating a deterministic approach towards democratization, they must be overcome to practically apply the model. Consequently, the author of this study has slightly modified the DLL model to provide both a rating and weighting factor.

Assertion #4: The best way to define priorities for United States democratic assistance to El Salvador is through a comprehensive, empirically-based assessment (a

modified DLL model) of causal factors currently obstructing or facilitating the development of democratic stability.

The DLL model posits ten primary independent variables along with eight sub-factors as being the most important factors for democratic stabilization. These ten variables and sub-factors, which will be discussed in detail shortly, are:

- 1) Legitimacy and Performance
- 2) Political Leadership
- 3) Political Culture
- 4) Social Structure and Socioeconomic Development
 - a) Socioeconomic Inequality
 - b) Population Growth
- 5) Civil Society
- 6) State and Society
- 7) Political Institutions
 - a) Parties and Party Systems
 - b) Electoral Systems
 - c) Constitutional Structure
 - d) Legislatures and Courts
- 8) Ethnic and Regional Conflict
 - a) Managing Ethnic Conflict
 - b) Decentralization
- 9) The Military
- 10) International Factors

In rating these factors, each factor will be rated on a scale of 1 to -1, with possible scores of 1, .5, 0, -.5, and -1. A 1 rating signifies conditions of that variable are strongly or completely conducive for democratic development. A .5 rating denotes partially supportive. The 0 rating is for neutral support while -.5 is for partially obstructing to democratic development. The final rating is -1 for those conditions of a variable that are strongly obstructing the development of democracy. Once a variable has been rated, it will be given a weighting factor between 1 and 2, denoting its relative importance, based on previous

research, in the development of democracy. Each variable is assumed to have at least a factor of one and weighting will be the exception to assure minimal skewing of results. After each factor has been rated, the cumulative total for all factors will be figured in Table 1.

It must be acknowledged at the outset this rating system is not intended nor can it be an absolutely precise measurement of the democratization factors. The ratings are also not intended to create a deterministic approach in a model otherwise lacking one. The rating system instead utilizes relative measurements to allow the practical application of the theory with minimal modification of the original model itself. The benefits of this relative measurement are significant. As mentioned earlier, the rating system allows an overall assessment to be conducted. It also provides repeatability for subsequent assessments. This means the results in the 1996 assessment serve as a marker for later assessments to measure the relative progress of democratization in El Salvador. The existence of a relative yardstick such as this is crucial for measuring the efficacy of United States aid to bolster democratization. If the United States provides aid to El Salvador over the next two years and a 1998 assessment reveals that targeted factors or the overall level of democratization has declined, the United States has empirical evidence that the current programs are ineffectual and thus require change or cessation; or there are other non-U.S. related factors which must be taken into account. More immediately, the rating allows an empirical, comprehensive assessment to identify those factors which pose the greatest obstacles to democratic development. Identifying the factors which are supporting and obstructing

democratic development gives the United States a road map to the best ways to support Salvadoran democratic stability.

In the following section, each DLL independent variable will be explained in general, then assessed specifically for El Salvador.

A. LEGITIMACY AND PERFORMANCE:

This factor out of all of the factors is perhaps the most complicated and intertwined. Since democracy is inherently based on legitimacy, it is difficult to determine in a democracy exactly where the independent variable of legitimacy ends and the dependent variable of democracy begins. Legitimacy may in fact be a component of democratic stability, which makes this variable a necessary condition of the dependent variable. DLL assert that almost as a given, “theories of democracy stress that democratic stability requires a widespread belief on among elites and masses in the legitimacy of the democratic system: that it is the best or least evil form of government and that in spite of shortcomings and failures, the existing political institutions are better than any others that might be established. Hence the democratic regime is morally entitled to demand obedience - to tax and draft, to make laws and enforce them, even, if necessary, by the use of force.”²³ In its most stable and secure form, legitimacy derives from an intrinsic value commitment rooted at levels of society. When this is not the case, as in El Salvador, legitimacy is increasingly shaped by the performance, both economically and politically, of the democratic regime. Regime performance deals with the governments ability to meet the needs and wants of the people

²³ Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, p. 9.

including as a foundation civil order, personal security, adjudication and arbitration of conflicts, and a minimum of predictability in the making and implementation of decisions. Civil unrest, government corruption, and human rights abuses are actions which undermine the political performance of a regime. Economic performance in the form of steady economic growth has generally been conducive to successful development of democracy.²⁴ For Latin America, the ability to achieve economic reform of their stunted economies has been one of the major but necessary obstacles to overcome for emerging democracies.²⁵

Having begun the transition to democracy within the past three years, the democratic government of El Salvador has no foundation for deep or even significant legitimacy. In fact, the transition occurred more as a means to end the bloody civil war rather than as an affirmation of democracy. While this desire to avoid conflict provides the government some goodwill, currently El Salvador's government is in somewhat in a test phase. Both the Right and Left are waiting to see how the political structure evolves before pledging full support. As DLL pointed out, the lack of incumbent, values-based legitimacy affects a country's democratic stability and in El Salvador's case, legitimacy is currently more performance than values based.

A major performance issue in El Salvador is how the government will implement the reforms agreed to by the 1992 Peace Accord. Although there have been many delays and

²⁴ Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, pp. 9-15.

²⁵ For an excellent, in-depth analysis of the relationship between legitimacy, stability and performance, effectiveness, and efficacy, refer to LINZ, Juan J. The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration(vol. 1). (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1991), pp. 16-23.

conflicts, with the mediating assistance of the United Nations observer Mission in El Salvador, the government of El Salvador has worked with the opposition to carry out a majority of the required reforms. By 1996, all but two major aspects of the agreement, land redistribution and vocational retraining for combatants, had been generally achieved. While the opposition might be able to complain that certain aspects of the reform still favor the rightist government and oligarchs, they have witnessed a willingness by the government to seek reform and work with the opposition. The watershed 1994 Presidential election, where the leftist coalition made a moderately strong second place showing of 27% of the vote, considering it was the first election they competed in and it was against a strongly entrenched oligarchic political system, proved that the political system had evolved into a political system of relatively free and fair competition. Additionally, the elimination of government-sponsored political assassinations and drastic decrease in human rights abuses and government repression has given the Left an increasing motivation to work with the current government to solidify these achievements.

For the Salvadoran elites, the measured, non-sweeping nature of the reforms initiated by the Salvadoran government has diminished their perceived threat to their self-interests. Knowing the government has not abandoned their interests, the elites are willing to forego some of their interests and support reform in order to protect the remaining interests. El Salvador's ability to maintain economic growth through democratization has helped win the support of economic elites. El Salvador's focus on achieving political stability to draw foreign capital for investment has resulted in an average GDP growth of approximately 5%

each year over the last three years. Consequently, the government has been able to tie economic prosperity, especially of the elites, to political stability, which translates into support for democracy.

Potential problems for the current government's legitimacy revolve around its inability to deal with high crime rates and widespread poverty.²⁶ In 1995, El Salvador had an unemployment rate upwards of 20% and an underemployment rate of up to 70%.²⁷ The government's failure to effectively redistribute land to the needy and to provide vocational training to former leftist guerrillas as agreed to in the 1992 accords intensifies frustration over this issue. Historically, El Salvador has suffered from significant income distribution inequality with the highest ten percent of the population receiving a much greater share of the wealth than the lowest quintile. Unfortunately, there is a lack of current statistics on income distribution to identify El Salvador's current position and what progress is being made to more equitably distribute wealth.²⁸ Nonetheless, by all other accounts El Salvador

²⁶ STORRS, K. Larry. Congressional Research Service Issue Brief: El Salvador under Calderon Sol: U.S. Foreign Assistance Decisions. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 1994), p. 4.

²⁷ Political Risk Services, El Salvador, 1995.

²⁸ The World Bank publishes economic statistics for major economic indicators of developing countries in its annual World Development Report. The standard measure of inequality of income distribution is the gini coefficient which is "calculated with reference to the departure of an actual distribution from a state of perfect income equality." (World Development Report 1996. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. viii.) The latest World Development Report is the 1996 report which has no data for the El Salvador listing under income distribution, neither in the form of gini coefficients or quintiles. Furthermore, the Statistical Abstract of Latin America (vol. 32), edited by James W. Wilkie, published in Los Angeles in 1996 by the University of California Los Angeles Latin American Center Publications, has current income distributions for the majority of Central American nations but reflects 1976-1977 as being the last year income distribution data was available for El Salvador.

continues to suffer from a highly skewed income distribution which favors the super wealthy and forces the lowest portions of the country to live in dire poverty.

The high poverty rate, combined with a population heavy with former soldiers and a ready availability of weapons has led to an extremely high crime rate. Bank robberies have often been carried out using hand grenades instead of pistols. Crime was listed in a recent survey as the greatest concern among Salvadorans but so far, the government has not come up with an effective method to decrease crime. Any attempt at increasing the police forces to combat crime is decried by the Left as the return of a military state. Attempts at land reform are staunchly resisted by the elites, whose support the current government desperately needs. These problems are not new to El Salvador and do not pose an immediate crisis. However, they are key performance issues that will affect the future legitimacy of the democratic government.

The legitimacy of the emergent government is slowly expanding with the Left and the Right is tolerating the changes. The government realizes it needs the support of both sides and has smartly negotiated the reforms to give each side some vested interest in supporting the democratic government. Steady economic growth, surprising so quickly after a civil war, bolsters Salvadoran legitimacy but the inability to effectively spread the wealth and stop crime remains a stumbling block to strong legitimacy for El Salvador.

Legitimacy and Performance Rating: +.5. Partially supportive of developing democratic stability. Given that El Salvador has no incumbent democracy to give it historically rooted legitimacy, it is heavily dependent on performance to overcome the mistrust prevalent on

both the conservative and reform sides. El Salvador's ability to achieve recent economic growth for the nation and to give both sides a vested interest in that growth has created some sense of legitimacy for the current government. However, the inability of the government to curb rising crime and deliver on all of the Peace agreements delay it from achieving full levels of legitimacy.

Weighting Factor: 2. The factor that there is no perfectly distinguishable line between legitimacy and democracy, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, denotes the very strong causal nature between this variable and democratic stability. If a government lacks legitimacy for any extended period of time, then it cannot be a government of the people which is a requirement for democracy. For these reasons, this variable is given a weighted factor of 2.

B. POLITICAL LEADERSHIP:

The democratic commitment and political skill of a country's political leadership has a force multiplying effect on democracy's ability to flourish. In the face of structural challenges to democracy, the more skillful, innovative, courageous and democratically committed a political leadership is, the more likely democracy will survive. Likewise, such attributes help strengthen growing democracies. This leadership is not limited to the President or Prime Minister, rather it applies to all political leaders in rejecting the use of unconstitutional and antidemocratic means to pursue power by any participant.²⁹

²⁹ Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, pp. 16-19.

As President and former leader of the ruling ARENA party, Calderon Sol is in the hub of political power in El Salvador. His long time membership in ARENA has given him strong ties to many of the key players in Salvadoran politics. In his inaugural and state of the nation addresses, Calderon regularly refers to the need to build democracy but consistently emphasizes the need for reconciliation within the nation and consolidation of peace. Previously characterized as part of the hard-line faction of the ARENA party, Calderon Sol often articulates strongly conservative positions. It would appear that Calderon is not so much dedicated to the ideal of democracy as he is committed to political stability. However, given that consolidating democracy is the key to political stability in the current environment, Calderon Sol indirectly has a vested interest and hence dedication to deepening democracy. A skilled and experienced political leader, Calderon Sol has realized the requirement to collaborate with all political and social forces in order to consolidate El Salvador's nascent democracy. Consequently, Calderon Sol and the ARENA party he leads has been perceived as becoming more modern and moderate since the recent death of ARENA's extremely conservative, hard-line founder Roberto D'Aubuisson.³⁰ Calderon Sol's strong ties to the rightist ARENA party and his reputation as a hard-line conservative in all likelihood have been beneficial for democratic development. In the same manner that "only Nixon could go to China", the fact Calderon Sol is so closely tied to the Right gives him an element of trust and support from the elites. The resulting latitude allows him to

³⁰ Storrs, p. 3.

carry out reformist actions without being threatening to the elites. Meanwhile, Calderon Sol is delivering democratic reforms to the masses which creates a legitimacy and cooperativeness on the part of the Left as well. However, one sector of society Calderon Sol has failed to fully co-opt into supporting the development of democracy is the powerful Salvadoran military, which will be discussed as independent variable number nine.

The political leadership of the opposition is also an important component of democratic stability. Since the former insurgents under the FMLN were transformed into a national political party, the willingness of its members to function within the current democratic system greatly affects the stability of the current government in so far as the opposition feels it has a viable framework to express its concerns and have them addressed. Ruben Zamora, a key leader of the Left and former FMLN presidential candidate assessed the Left's position as one of waiting and seeing. To use the Linzian classification referenced in the section covering the evaluation of the DLL model, the Left in El Salvador reflects semi-loyal opposition. They are willing to attempt to work within the current democratic framework so long as they feel certain basic requirements are met but the Left still does not grant full legitimacy to the current government. In other words, the Left is willing to recognize the current government as being the elected government but it is not clear the Left would support the democratic government if it was severely challenged or they felt the government was failing to deliver on agreed elements of the 1992 Peace Accords.³¹

³¹ ZAMORA, Ruben A. From a lecture and question session given at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, Monterey, CA, March 27, 1996.

In the politically divisive period of trying to consolidate an emerging government, Calderon Sol appears to have the commitment and the political skill to help develop democracy stability. His commitment, however, is not to democracy for democracy's sake, but rather for stability and national progress. This means there will be limits to the extent of substantive democratization he advocates. Additionally, the constant threat of military intervention will also stifle the speed and extent of democratization he pursues.

Political Leadership Rating: +.5. Partially supports the development of democratic stability. The commitment by both sides to try to stabilize democracy, for whatever reason, creates a positive environment for stabilization. However, the lack of commitment to the ideal of democracy by both sides limits the extent of support for this variable.

Weighting Factor: 1. There is no empirical evidence in general or specifically in the case of El Salvador which shows a causal effect for this variable that is worthy of extra weighting.

C. POLITICAL CULTURE:

In order for democracy not to degenerate into extremism, polarization, and violence, there must be mechanisms to contain conflict within certain behavioral boundaries. One of the most important factors in this regard is a country's political culture. Political culture is the beliefs and values concerning politics that prevail within both the elites and the masses. Several of these beliefs and values have been identified as crucial for stable and effective democracy. These beliefs and values include: "belief in the legitimacy of democracy; tolerance for opposition parties, beliefs, and preferences; a willingness to compromise with

political opponents and underlying this, pragmatism and flexibility; trust in the political environment, and cooperation, particularly among political competitors; moderation in political positions and partisan identifications; civility of political discourse; and political efficacy and participation, based on principles of political equality but tempered by the presence of a subjective role and a parochial role.”³² These beliefs can perhaps be aptly summed up by the concept that citizens, groups and political parties are willing to work within the democratic political system, even if it means moderating or foregoing some of their own agendas. All involved are willing to do this because they believe democratic government is worth the sacrifice. A major source of political beliefs and values is a country’s historical and cultural traditions. While a democratic tradition may assist in the current development of democracy, a lack of democratic traditions is certainly surmountable, albeit more difficult, as has been demonstrated repeatedly throughout Latin America.³³

El Salvador has a long political history basically devoid of democratic tradition.³⁴ From its independence in 1838, Salvador has experienced frequent revolutions and political overthrows. The elites have historically attempted to exclude the masses from political participation and opposition by using political and violent repression. When it appeared that oligarchy interests were threatened by political uprising, the elites and their protectors, the military, have not hesitated to step in and violently quash uprisings or commit electoral fraud

³² Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, p. 19.

³³ Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, pp. 19-21.

³⁴ TULCHIN, Joseph S. and Gary Bland, editors. Is There a Transition to Democracy in El Salvador?. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), p. 1.

to maintain political power. This phenomenon was demonstrated by the 1932 *matanza* in which as many as 30,000 Salvadorans died (explained in Chap. II) and the civil war of the 1980s in which tens of thousands of Salvadorans were killed. The *matanza* was the elite response to political dissatisfaction and action by the masses which resulted in the military brutally wiping out popular contestation for political power and instituting a fifty year regime of military repression. In 1972, when the military opened political competition to outside groups, a moderate Christian Democrat, Jose Napoleon Duarte,, unexpectedly won the presidential election against the government-sponsored military candidate. Despite the fair electoral victory of the Christian Democrats, the military used its control over the electoral process to fraudulently award the victory to their own candidate. This occurred in both the 1972 and 1977 elections. Even after the facade of democracy was restored in 1982, the military still was called in to brutally repress the leftist insurgents through government--sponsored death squads and counterinsurgency battalions of the National Police.

For the masses, this antagonistic posture of the elites resulted in political competition that has taken the form of revolution or political violence against the government. The repeated government abuses made the masses distrustful of the elites. This win-lose or zero-sum nature of past Salvadoran politics has resulted in a wide social polarization of the society and a wide chasm of distrust own both sides about the true intent of the opposition. If history provides the soil for democracy to take root in, then El Salvador has a very rocky landscape by all accounts.

The political culture of El Salvador is liberalizing through recent events. The competitive political elections since 1982, although not completely democratic, have given El Salvador a grounding and familiarity in competitive politics, helping to imbed the process into the political culture. More importantly, the recent successes of signing and implementing the Peace Accords, which required both sides to compromise, have shown that mutually beneficial cooperation is possible between all parties. The fact that the 1994 elections were relatively free and fair and that there has been a peaceful transfer of power between presidents also reinforces an environment nurturing trust and cooperation. However, there have been no transfers of power between the major opposition groups which remains a major test of just how loyal this new system of opposition is. Despite the void of historical democracy, the legitimacy of democracy is bolstered by a culture that is embracing democracy as a means to end a history full of violence and bloodshed.

The political culture of El Salvador is at a watershed. There is no strong historical legitimacy for democracy but there is a nation turning to it as a means to end the violence. The competition between elites and masses has been consistently characterized by violence, electoral fraud, and repression, creating an atmosphere of distrust and antagonism. However, the recent transition to democracy has produced positive experiences for all sides in working together to achieve stability. Each success solidifies the legitimacy of democracy in Salvadoran political culture. However, the strongly polarized nature of society will take time to overcome and several key tests remain before El Salvador's political culture can be characterized as supporting democracy.

Political Culture Rating: 0. The antagonistic history rooted in El Salvador's political culture is slowly being countered by the successes encountered through political cooperation or at least toleration.

Weighting Factor: 1. There is no empirical evidence in general or specifically in the case of El Salvador which shows a causal effect for this variable that is worthy of extra weighting.

D. SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

One of the most powerful factors that alters political beliefs and values for an increase in the prospects for stable democracy is socioeconomic development. As mentioned earlier, Seymour Lipset identified this correlation as early as 1959 and subsequent research has repeatedly confirmed a strong positive relationship between socioeconomic development and democracy. This relationship is causal in at least one direction: higher levels of development generate a significantly higher probability of democracy and stable democracy. Contrary to the past prevalence of measuring socioeconomic development through the per capita national income, DLL assert the more important underlying phenomenon appears to be reduction in poverty and the improvement of literacy, life expectancy and other factors as measured in the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index.

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite of three measures of human development: longevity, knowledge which is weighted two-thirds to adult literacy and one-third to mean years of schooling, and standard of living measured as real GDP per capita

adjusted for the cost of living. Each of these measures is expressed in equally weighted scales of 0 to 1, which are then averaged in the overall index.

Additional sub-factors of socioeconomic development are socioeconomic inequality and population growth. Socioeconomic inequality reflects the extent of distribution of wealth across the range of society and the ability for all citizens to share in economic fortune. For population growth, DLL assert rapid population growth is a socioeconomic problem often overlooked in evaluation of democratic performance and prospects. The political consequences follow closely but not entirely from the economic ones. To the extent that a country's population is growing rapidly, the country's economic growth is absorbed each year in providing for its additional people at existing levels rather than improving per capita standards. This lack of per capita improvement can in turn be viewed as a lack of performance and thus undermine political legitimacy. DLL imply that population growth rates from 2 to 3 percent are reason for concern while three and over are problematic.³⁵

In the 1995 United Nations Development Program Report, El Salvador received an HDI rating of 0.579 and was ranked 115 out of 174 countries. The highest rating was .950 for Canada and the lowest was Niger with 0.207. This placed El Salvador at the bottom of the middle third, just two places from the lowest category.³⁶ In 1994, El Salvador ranked 112 out of 173 countries, and in 1993, El Salvador ranked 110. This decline in ranking does not

³⁵ Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, pp. 21-27.

³⁶ Associated Press. *AP Worldstream*. August 17, 1995.

reflect an actual decline, but rather a relative decline to other nations.³⁷ What it does signal is that there has been a lack of significant progress in this area for El Salvador. The masses have not seen a significant rise in their quality of life in association with the emerging democracy, thus undermining the performance factor necessary to supplement legitimacy.

What is worse for this factor is that the distribution of wealth is heavily skewed toward the elites further degrading the quality of life for the masses. Given that El Salvador's economy is heavily agricultural dependent (the top three principal exports are coffee, sugar, and cotton), land ownership is a large determinant of wealth.³⁸ Perhaps nowhere else in Latin America has there been such a historically high concentration of land wealth under such a small group of elites. According to one legend, almost all of the land in El Salvador was owned by just fourteen families who operated enormous haciendas. While this fact is not entirely true, the enormous concentration of land and wealth into the hands of a very few is not highly exaggerated. Eventually, some land was distributed to the peasants for subsistence farming. However, the 1980's focus on increasing exports to raise infrastructure capital saw a return of the large hacienda-like agricultural operations that soon pushed subsistence farmers off of their lands. This resulted in many peasant land owners having to migrate to the cities or become poorly paid contract labor for the large plantations.

³⁷ Latin America Weekly Report. *UN shows rise in development index; ALL COUNTRIES UP, THOUGH SOME SLIP IN WORLD RANKING*. Latin American Newsletters, Ltd, 31 Aug 95, p. 394.

³⁸ Political Risk Services, *Political and Economic Assessment of El Salvador*, IBC Licensing USA, 1995.

Either outcome meant that the peasant lost the opportunity to create anything more than a subsistence lifestyle and the elites benefited from capital concentration and cheap labor.

While standard, specific income distribution statistics such as gini coefficients from the World Bank have not been published recently for El Salvador,³⁹ there are still many other factors which point to a heavily skewed income distribution in that country. Despite a steady economic growth, averaging approximately 5% increase in GDP yearly, in the 1990s El Salvador's unemployment rate continues to be over 18% and to climb slightly. More disturbing and pointing to a lack of systemic opportunity to distribute wealth is the fact upwards of 70% of the labor force is underemployed. This concentration of wealth has led to a high level of relative deprivation which is evident to even members of the Salvadoran elites.⁴⁰

Further indications of the lack of socioeconomic development and distribution is the fact that in the early 1990s, 27% of Salvadorans lived in poverty and 58% did not even have access to potable water.⁴¹ Despite an average yearly inflation rate of over ten percent for 1993 - 1995 and GDP growth in excess of 5%, workers' real wages only rose 2.3% yearly over the same period. The key to stimulating more equitable distribution of the wealth is through land redistribution. The United States attempted to push land reform in the 1980s

³⁹ See footnote number 28.

⁴⁰ Blandon, p. 60.

⁴¹ WILKINSON, Tracy. "Central America Slips from Policy Agenda Into Poverty", *The Los Angeles Times*, October 18, 1993, p. A1, Col 5.

and the Peace Accord agreement required land redistribution to former government and insurgents combatants alike. However, the elites have continually been able to forestall any action on this issue or vocational retraining as well. Until the government redistributes land and, to a lesser extent, provides training for peasants, socioeconomic inequality will remain a high obstacle to democratic stability. El Salvador has a long history of violence based on the masses rising in violence against this very type of perceived unjust distribution.

For the remaining sub-factor of population growth, El Salvador's 1995 rate of population growth was 1.9%, down from a 1990 rate of 2.2%.⁴² These figures indicate population growth may be a marginal obstruction to future democratic stability but currently does not appear to be a significant problem.

Social Structure and Socioeconomic Rating: -1. Socioeconomically, El Salvador has not been able to make significant progress in its quality of life factors as measured by the United Nations Human Development Index. Compounding this problem is the inability for the country to achieve any meaningful results in more equitably distributing the wealth and gaining performance legitimacy from the masses. This inequality is particularly disturbing since it has traditionally been a point of political uprising in the past, such as the 1932 uprisings. These two factors pose a major obstacle to democratic stability in accordance with DLL's research. The final socioeconomic factor of population growth is not a major obstacle

⁴² 1995 figure from Political Risk Service, the 1990 figure is from UNITED NATIONS. The United Nations and El Salvador: 1990 - 1995. (New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1995), p. 53.

to democratic stability since the population growth rate is below the prescribed level for concern, but nonetheless it does rest close to this initial limit.

Weighting Factor: 2. Initial research by Lipset in 1959 and subsequent research has repeatedly confirmed a strong positive correlation between this variable and democratic stability. The fact that socioeconomic frustration has already been the source of revolt in El Salvador further displays the strong causal nature of this variable, thus warranting a relative weighting factor of 2.

E. CIVIL SOCIETY:

Civil society consists of a vast array of organizations, both formal and informal: “interest groups, cultural and religious organizations, civic and developmental associations, issue-oriented movements, the mass media, research and educational institutions, and similar organizations. What distinguishes these groups from other collective actors in society is that civil society organizations are concerned with and act in the public realm, relate to the state, and encompass and respect pluralism and diversity.”⁴³ The classic function of civil society has been to limit state power and resist tyrannical abuse of state power. In a post-transition democracy, civil society contributes to deepening democracy by monitoring state power; holding representatives accountable; stimulating political participation and efficacy; inculcating norms of tolerance and trust; providing additional channels outside political parties for the expression of interests; developing future political leaders; and finally some

⁴³ Diamond, Linz and Lipset, p. 27.

civil groups explicitly work to improve democracy. Civil society impacts democracy by acting as both the fuel for political participation and the check against abuses.⁴⁴

Making the giant leap from a militarily repressed society towards a free society has seen several aspects of Salvadoran civil society ebb and flow. The net effect though, has been increased freedom, thus strengthening civil society. Perhaps the most vivid example of this is the Catholic Church. During the 1980s, Catholic priests in El Salvador, especially those at the Jesuit-run University of Central America, tried to speak out and advocate reform of government abuses. In 1989, their attempts to form some semblance of a civil society resistance resulted in the assassination of six priests, carried out by Salvadoran Army officers, and allegedly ordered by the Minister of Defense, possibly with the knowledge of the President. Today the Church is actively and openly participating in advocating increased freedom and equality for all citizens without fear of retaliation. During the pre-1992 era the only operating printing press in El Salvador was the Jesuit University of Central American press. Today, there has been a drastic increase in the number of presses operating and publishing books and periodicals, advocating the whole range of political perspectives.⁴⁵ There have been a few reports of recently-attempted censorship of the media or control of journalists by the Salvadoran government, but these have not been frequent.

⁴⁴ Diamond, Linz and Lipset, pp. 27-31.

⁴⁵ HAMMOND, John L. *Politics and Publishing in Transition in El Salvador*. Latin American Research Review, 1995, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 210-223. At the time of publication, Hammond was associated with the Hunter College and Graduate Center, City University of New York.

Attempts by the elites to repress civil groups such as labor unions, in order to maximize owner profits seem to persist but even these are coming under direct pressure to cease. While El Salvador has some history of labor unions with the ability to effectively strike, factories in the recent Free Trade Zones have reportedly attempted to intimidate workers and bust attempts at organizing unions. The Free Trade Zones were part of a 1980's El Salvador program designed to lure foreign investment through tax breaks and inducement. It is here that large United States apparel manufacturers have contracted for cheap Salvadoran labor to make various apparel items. Numerous workers have complained about inhumane conditions in certain factories known as *maquilas* where employees are restricted from using the bathroom more than a certain number of times per day. If employees, mostly women, stay in the bathroom for more than a minute, then male company representatives allegedly drag them out so they do not waste production time. After several employees attempted to organize a union to stop these abuses, they were intimidated and fired. Human rights and Church groups investigated these claims and to a large extent confirmed them in the international press. Consequently, some United States manufacturers such as Eddie Bauer and The Gap did not renew their contracts with the *maquilas*.

While it is important that the specific *maquila* abuses are being addressed, it is also very important to note that the freedom existed in El Salvador to investigate and speak out publicly, even internationally, against abuses by the elites. The governments efficacy in reducing the yearly number of death squad killings to zero and significantly curtailing illegal detentions and abuses of opposition members reflects a civil society with the freedom to

grow as a source of balance to government abuses. The increasing number of groups which are speaking and writing in opposition to the government, and the government's tolerance of this criticism demonstrates a society which is availing itself of the opportunity. A March 1995 United States State Department dispatch of the 1994 United States Human Rights Report on El Salvador confirmed that to a very great extent El Salvador has fulfilled its obligation to create a national environment of academic, political, associational, and personal freedom. There have been a minimal number of violations but the government of El Salvador has effectively neutralized government repression.

Civil Society Rating: +.5. While old repressive habits do not die easily and continue to a minimal extent, the new context of Salvadoran civil society is laying the initial experience and foundation for functional, freedom based democracy.

Weighting Factor: 1. There is no empirical evidence in general or specifically in the case of El Salvador which shows a causal effect for this variable that is worthy of extra weighting.

F. STATE AND SOCIETY:

If democracy is to be stable, it must find a balance between a number of competing values. For the state, this balance is between representativeness and governability. In the economic arena, an overriding lesson from DLL's empirical study was the need to limit direct state ownership and control of the economy. This is true not only for the economic consequences but for the perverse political incentives that prevail under statist systems. One of these destructive incentives is that when the state is the primary source of advantage and

prestige, there is an increased incentive to monopolize power for the incumbents and exclude any opposition.

Second, statism is an inducement to pervasive political corruption and rent seeking. This type of endemic political corruption has been a major factor undermining support for democratic regimes in the developing world and paving the way for their overthrow. The solution to this corruption is not necessarily a limited state but rather a professionalized and in some ways strengthened state. Countries with the greatest success of avoiding this corruption for the most part have systems wherein the rules and procedures governing public sector employment are institutionalized and insulated from political interventions.⁴⁶

The Salvadoran legacy of state and society relationship is perhaps best summarized by Howard Wiarda in his 1992 book American Foreign Policy Toward Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s. He writes that “Latin America has a history of not just of strong corporate agencies but strong state organization as well. Indeed, the bureaucratic-authoritarian-paternalist or ‘Hapsburgian,’ model that emerged in Iberia from the twelfth to the sixteenth century and was then carried over to the New World remains, even today, the model to which many Latin Americans aspire. It is no longer the only model but it certainly has continuing strong roots and support: witness the powerful strength of conservatism and the Right in such countries as El Salvador. . .”⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Diamond, Linz and Lipset, pp. 31-33.

⁴⁷ WIARDA, Howard J. American Foreign Policy Toward Latin America in the 80s and 90s: Issues and Controversies from Reagan to Bush. (New York: New York University Press, 1992), p. 145.

This statist approach led to state government involvement in several major aspects of the economy. El Salvador currently has government participation in the utilities, public works, agriculture, banking, and broadcasting.⁴⁸ However, Calderon Sol has enthusiastically continued the pursuit of new legislation to attract private foreign investment, cut price controls, reform the tax system, and to privatize the banking system and other state enterprises. These actions reflect the laissez-faire neoliberalist approach of the powerful, rightist ARENA to which Calderon Sol belongs.

While significant progress has been made in reducing the level of red-tape, bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption in El Salvador, a considerable amount of work remains to be accomplished. Organized labor, which comprises 15% of the labor force, has opposed government efforts at economic reform, especially privatization of state enterprises. In 1994, El Salvador's Vice President resigned to defend himself against charges of political corruption. Even today there are some prominent Salvadorans who remain outside the effective grasp of the law.⁴⁹ Older military officers and political leaders who are used to the state running society will have to fade from the scene before professionalism can truly take root. Nonetheless, current neoliberalist steps are working in favor, even if only partially, to help stabilize democracy.

⁴⁸ Political Risk Service, El Salvador, 1995.

⁴⁹ United States State Department 1994 Human Rights Report, p. 79.

State and Society Rating: +.5. While El Salvador has set a progressive course to pull the state out as the center of the society, there is a tremendous legacy which will take a considerable time to overcome. Nonetheless, current trends are positive on this variable.

Weighting Factor: 1. There is no empirical evidence in general or specifically in the case of El Salvador which shows a causal effect for this variable that is worthy of extra weighting.

G. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS:

This independent variable is the broadest variable of the DLL model and as evidenced later, the one presenting the hardest rating problems. Political institutionalization in general, and the party system in particular, is strongly related to the persistence and stability of democracy. Institutionalized systems structure behaviors and generate long-term views that induce moderation and accommodation. This is a common assertion throughout political literature.⁵⁰ Democracies with more coherent and effective political institutions perform better, maintaining a rule of law and stable structures for representing interests. Further, institutionalized political structures provide a legitimacy that help them persist through crisis situations.

Under the variable political institutions, there are four sub-factors. First, the institutionalization of political parties and party systems is important because political parties remain the most important mediating institutions between the citizenry and the state. DLL's

⁵⁰ For more information see MAINWARING, Scott and Timothy R. Scully (eds). Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

empirical research has shown general support for the proposition that a system of two or a few parties, with broad social and ideological bases, may be more conducive to democracy. Accordingly, fragmentation of parties into smaller parties that come and go has been associated with democratic instability and breakdown. DLL do not assert a strong correlation exists on this factor.

The next DLL sub-factor is electoral systems and relates to whether a state has a majoritarian or proportional electoral system. DLL assert that both systems have their strengths and weakness, consequently the choice should depend on choosing the system which poses the least threat to democracy based on the historical patterns of cleavage and conflict.

Constitutional structure is the third sub-factor. It asserts parliamentary systems are more conducive to democratic stability than presidential systems. Parliamentary systems are more flexible, quicker in their responsiveness, and less prone to polarization. Presidential systems concentrate significant power under one person, creating the potential for abuse of power and lack of representation for various sections of society.⁵¹

The final factor under political institutions is legislatures and courts. In presidential systems, there must be some independence on the part of the legislature to scrutinize the executive branch, check its excesses and enforce some form of accountability. Similarly, a strong and independent judiciary is important for democracy.

⁵¹ Diamond, Linz and Lipset, pp. 33-42.

In order to arrive at a rating for the overall variable, each factor will be assessed plus or minus on how it fits into the DLL criteria. Then the results will be aggregated to determine a comprehensive net effect on developing democratic stability.

The existence of between two and a few (often cited as five in other literature) political parties with broad, institutionalized social and ideological appeal is considered favorable to democratic development. In El Salvador, the political parties are largely segregated along class lines and defined by class interests. Currently, the most powerful party is the ARENA party which represents the strongly conservative, rightist interests and approaches of El Salvador's oligarch. The moderates at the center of the political spectrum were previously represented by the Christian Democrat (CD) party, which wielded some power as the second largest party. However, in November 1994 nine of the Christian Democrat's deputies splintered off to form the Social Christian Renovation Movement stating the CD had become nothing more than an appendage of the ARENA party.

Likewise, the leftist coalition formed under the FMLN and Democratic Convergence parties also fragmented in late 1994. The Left of the political spectrum consisted of various parties representing the demands of the masses for greater equality and rights. During the civil war, five different insurgency groups banded together under the FMLN to concentrate their efforts. For the 1994 Presidential election, the Left pursued the same approach, grouping different parties into a coalition to concentrate political power. The Leftist coalition only won 27% of the second runoff vote while ARENA won 68%. After this loss, the coalition splintered and the People's Revolutionary Army and the National Resistance

split from the FMLN party. Other smaller parties include the National Conciliation Party (Partido de Conciliación Nacional (PCN)) and the Democratic Convergence (CD) (part of the 1994 coalition with FMLN). Additionally, a November 14, 1995 Interpress Service article by Juan Jose Dalton reported that El Salvador now even has the “Mother Earth” political party. This party was created to represent the needs and views of the indigenous and peasant communities and will be guided by the Sun God. This example demonstrates the ability to organize politically is thriving in El Salvador.

The political party structure is fragmented with well over five parties, some of which are enduring like the FMLN and CD, while it is uncertain if their splinter groups and the Mother Earth parties will last. Even worse, no party has a broad, institutionalized base. All parties draw primarily from a narrow spectrum of class interests. Also, the splits within the major opposition groups, the FMLN and the CD, means they have lost considerable power in competing their alternatives and checking the incumbent ARENA party.

According to Ricardo Cordoba, a Salvadoran political scientist, the FMLN split in 1994 has resulted in the FMLN not presenting a single initiative in the Salvadoran Congress which has resulted in any substantial impact. Cordoba summarizes the current party structures as completely inadequate for present-day El Salvador, lacking the necessary institutionalization. Instead, he states all parties, including the government right-wing party ARENA (the strongest and most cohesive of all), suffer from a crisis of representation. They remain political groupings designed to respond to the civil war and not to articulate a

consensus beyond a natural power base.⁵² His assertion appears to be reaffirmed by the unraveling and lack of cohesion of traditional political parties. Salvador Sanchez Ceren, the leftist elected to head the FMLN in December 1994, has pledged to reunite the Left so there is an effort to rectify this obstacle but results remain to be seen. One important factor throughout all parties is their overt support for democratic, loyal opposition under the current system rather than political violence. While parties are showing somewhat increasing autonomy and adaptability, they lack Huntington's necessary cohesion and complexity to institutionalize and strengthen their base across broad spectrums. The increasing number of political parties and the lack of broad-based institutionalization of Salvadoran political parties remains an obstacle (-) to democratic stability.

Concerning the electoral process, El Salvador has a proportional representation system. This system appears the least threatening to stability because it allows all sectors of any proportion, especially those which have been historically disenfranchised, to have the assurance of some representation at the national level no matter how small. This is a positive factor for political institutions.

On the other hand, the constitutional system is presidential which DLL assert undermines the stability of democracy due to too much power being concentrated in the hands of one individual. The El Salvador case is worsened because Calderon Sol's dominance of the majority ARENA party endows him with control over the legislative assembly as well. This factor is a minus (-) for the variable of political institutions.

⁵² ORLEBAR, Edward. *Blocks Remain on the path to El Salvador Peace*. (Financial Times, 3 Mar 1995), p. 7.

El Salvador's legislature is a unicameral, 84 member legislative assembly. Given that ARENA has 39 seats in the assembly and can consistently count on at least 4 votes from the somewhat allied CD party, this gives ARENA control of both the presidency and the legislature. The legislature is important in the political process making the statutory law which is one means of checking the president. However, the previously mentioned dominance by Calderon Sol of the ARENA party means he personally wields enormous power that goes basically unopposed by the legislature.

Compounding this lack of legislative checks and balances is a historically ineffectual, powerless judicial system. Despite the many illegal abuses of Salvadorans by elites from 1932 to 1989, the judicial system never brought a military member to trial for any of the crimes. The strong military had always prevented the judicial branch from exercising any real power. The Supreme Court of El Salvador is appointed by the legislature. The Supreme Court then appoints judges of the lower courts. This direct appointment system meant that judges served at the leisure of their appointers and lacked the autonomy to exercise judicial autonomy. Furthermore, the appointment of lucrative judgeships led to a corruption-inducing patronage system with judgeships given for favors rather than merit. In August 1994, after long debates, the Congress appointed a new Supreme Court and replaced the Chief Justice who frequently used judicial appointments as patronage. While this new court has been an improvement, judicial reform has been slow. The desired effect of the new court in rooting out corrupt judges at lower levels has been mostly unfulfilled. Despite attempts to have the Supreme Court judges appointed by a more impartial, autonomous, and merit--

based system, the legislature has insisted that the appointments be at their pleasures. Some judicial reforms have occurred since 1992. However, it is still unclear if the judiciary will be able to assert itself independently and truly act as a check and balance of the other branches. The absence of a properly functioning judiciary is a minus.

Political Institutions Rating: -.5. Assessing the political institutions of El Salvador has revealed that fragmented, non-institutionalized political parties are still an obstacle to democratic stability. The electoral process is a positive impact while the constitutional factor is a negative impact. The concentration of power into the hands of the president and the lack of accountability of the legislative and judicial branches also hinder democratic development. With three political institutions acting as obstacles to democratic stability and one operating for the development of democratic stability, the result is a partial obstruction of the dependent variable, a mitigated, negative impact.

Weighting Factor: 1.5. The abundance of literature by DLL, Mainwaring, and Scully,⁵³ all demonstrate a strong relationship between institutionalized channels of representation and contestation to democratic stability. While this cannot be considered the strongest causal factor, it still warrants a weighting based on the previous research of causality.

H. ETHNIC AND REGIONAL CONFLICT:

Ethnicity, loosely defined as any highly inclusive, distinctive group identity based on culture and common origins, represents the most difficult type of cleavage for democracy to manage. This cleavage results in indivisible competing demands which are zero-sum in

⁵³ MAINWARING, Scott and Timothy R. Scully, eds. Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

nature. According to DLL, many scholars have expressed profound skepticism about the possibility of stable democracy in societies in which multiple ethnicities become politicized. Although not specifically addressed by DLL, there is an implied acknowledgment that there are other types of cleavages which occur. However, ethnic cleavage is the most obstructive to stable democracy. The apparent key for democratic stability with the other types of cleavages such as class or religion, is to utilize other cross-cutting cleavages to diversify and widen an individual's base of who they politically identify with.

Falling under the variable ethnic and regional conflict are the two factors of managing ethnic conflict and decentralization. Research done by DLL and supported by other authors concludes there is no one, appropriate formula for managing ethnic conflict. Nonetheless, empirical studies indicate that indefinitely excluding individuals or particular groups from citizenship and from power is detrimental to democratic stability. If certain segments have no vested interest or representation in the current government structure, they have no interest in preserving that structure.

Decentralization of power creating, local governments that are accountable to local electorates, is an important element of the democratic process, especially where ethnic or regional cleavages exist. The devolution and democratization of power at the local level serve democratic consolidation by removing barriers to participation, enhancing the responsiveness and accountability of government, testing innovations in governance, diminishing the winner-take-all character of politics, and giving opposition and minority political parties and social forces a chance to have a share of power, to learn the complexities

of governing, and to establish political credibility and responsibility by developing experience first at the lower levels of power.⁵⁴

In this respect, El Salvador enjoys the good fortune of having a relatively homogenous population of 89% Mestizo and 11% Amerind(ian). There are no major, inherent regional conflicts.⁵⁵ The grossly predominant common ethnic and religious affiliation for Salvadorans precludes ethnic cleavages. Despite the recent organization of the Mother Earth political party to increase awareness and preservation of indigenous culture, there is no significant cleavage even with the limited indigenous population. The geographical boundaries of El Salvador were established in 1838 and there has been a consistent lack of regional conflicts or independence movements since then. In terms of managing ethnic conflict there is no requirement to do so in El Salvador.

The cleavage that does exist is along the have and have not lines of wealth and power. Management of this conflict is a function of the cross-cutting institutionalization of political parties addressed earlier. One factor that is helpful in relieving these cleavages is the decentralization of power to lower civil levels. During his campaign and inauguration, Calderon Sol stressed the need to continue decentralizing public services.⁵⁶ The FY 1996 United States AID Development Assistance Fund Request for El Salvador assessed the

⁵⁴ Diamond, Linz and Lipset, pp. 42-46.

⁵⁵ Political Risk Service, El Salvador, 1995.

⁵⁶ Congressional Research Service, *El Salvador under Calderon Sol: United States Foreign Assistance Decisions*, 1994.

nation as having success at slowly devolving authority to local levels and generating financial reforms to significantly increase funds for projects to be administered at the local level. Decentralization is being consistently achieved in the post-1992 El Salvador.

Ethnic and Regional Conflict Rating: +1. The increasing decentralization combined with the absence of ethnic and regional conflicts means this factors is strongly supportive of the development of democratic stability.

Weighting Factor: 1. There is no empirical evidence in general or specifically in the case of El Salvador which shows a causal effect for this variable that is worthy of extra weighting.

I. THE MILITARY:

In their twenty-six case empirical study, DLL discovered that in most of the countries, democracy has been threatened or overturned by military establishments that regarded themselves:

as the privileged definers and guardians of the national interest. Typically this military intervention into political control has been induced by the corruption, stagnation, or malfunctioning of democratic institutions, coming in the wake of crises and low levels of regime legitimacy. While the military's size, autonomy, professional doctrine, and role conception may determine its threshold for intervention, they do not constitute an independent cause for democratic breakdown. Thus the single most important requirement for keeping the military at bay is to make democracy work so it accrues deep legitimacy.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Diamond, Linz and Lipset, p. 46.

While the empirical insight is well taken, this assertion poses problems when used as an independent variable for democratic stability. In essence, one aspect of the DLL argument is that one way to keep democratic stability from breaking down via military intervention is to keep democratic stability from breaking down. The tautological nature of this assertion undermines its credibility as a theoretical independent variable even though it retains its importance as a valuable observation.

External factors to the political process do shape the military's disposition to intervene. Previous experiences with political intervention can shape the mentality of many officers and the formal role conception and organization of the armed forces. If a military has previously played the role of intervening to restore national order and national interests, they can come to see themselves as the political guardians of the state with the responsibility to intervene whenever they feel things are going awry. In a democracy, this intervention and potential for intervention are obstacles to democratic stability. New and insecure democracies must therefore find ways to strengthen or begin to develop civilian control over the military. The civilian government must then increasingly constrain the military to the core national security functions appropriate for it to perform in a democracy. This process requires civilian empowerment wherein civilian leaders acquire sufficient military and intelligence expertise to interact with and monitor the military and intelligence services. Additionally, this expertise is necessary for the civilian leadership to create a politically-led strategy for the military that is effectual and credible.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Diamond, Linz and Lipset, pp. 46-48.

Although the armed forces accepted the 1992 cease-fire/Peace Accords and have been responsive to civilian authority under the ARENA presidencies, they retain their potential for dominating politics. Starting with the 1932 military assumption of national power, the military has a history of extensive, predominant involvement in politics and government, either through direct rule or through support of civilian administrations. Military power has generally been exercised to protect the interests of the elite benefactors of the military themselves. The military, though, has always framed their repression and actions as necessary steps in the national interest to prevent subversion. It is hard to examine a better example of DLL's concept of a military that considers itself the definer and guardian of the national interests than the military of El Salvador.

The extremely powerful guardian role of the military continues through the present despite recent attempts to purge the military of its worst human rights abusers. One of the military leaders responsible for many of the military's political assassinations was former Defense Minister Rene Ponce. The 1992 Peace Accord called for the purging of military rights abusers, so Ponce was replaced by General Humberto Corado, the current Minister of Defense. This replacement substantially removed the military from the day-to-day administrative aspects of government, but it had very little effect on the overarching power of the military to intervene at will. The government agreed to substantially purge and hopefully punish all military officers who were suspected of abuses and conduct outside the scope of constitutional authority during the civil war. Unfortunately the government lacked the political will and determination to more than superficially carry this task out and the

military was allowed to transition largely unpunished and with the rightist political characteristic of its officer corp intact.⁵⁹ Consequently, Corado is assessed to be one of El Salvador's most powerful individuals. This position has been reinforced by Corado's retention and use of the authority to make military promotions and transfers to further strengthen his control over the military. If Corado decided to oust the civilian leaders, he would have the military capability to do so and senior officers would be unlikely to oppose him.⁶⁰

Based on DLL's research, the determinative factor then becomes how well the democracy performs. The military will be less inclined to intervene so long as it does not perceive a crisis or threat to national or military interests. Currently, democracy has flourished even if it has not thrived in El Salvador, giving the military no cause to intervene. Perhaps one key in this stability has been the slow pace of reform, deliberately non-hostile to the military, which has taken place. This non-threatening approach has created a cooperative spirit between General Corado and both former President Cristiani and now President Calderon Sol. General Corado has strong personal ties with Calderon Sol. Corado lends military support based on a spirit of cooperation and mutual benefit. Corado even made public assurances that the military would not interfere in the 1994 elections.

⁵⁹ Blandon, p. 49.

⁶⁰ Political Risk Services, El Salvador, 1995.

In fact, the military has already demonstrated a willingness to work with the evolving political structure in El Salvador. Besides the military's cooperation with the ARENA government and the pledge not to interfere in the last presidential elections, the military has complied with a substantial downsizing of manpower, approximately 50%. One of the most promising signs is a movement by the military to a new educational and professional doctrine. Although the reform is far from orienting the military to the requisite civilian control over the military; it acknowledges an acceptance that military actions must be in compliance with the Salvadoran Constitution and it restructures some components of the military to be more compatible with democracy.⁶¹ The reform is a baby step in a positive direction.

Still, no matter how rosy this cooperation appears, it conceals a major obstruction. The military has been willing to cooperate with a rightist, conservative government with which it feels closely aligned. El Salvador's armed forces have been avowed arch-enemies of the Left, who they perceive as threats to the national interest. The continuing and substantial power and autonomy of the military sets the stage for a major non-democratic conflict, should a leftist, likely to be anti-military, government ever come to power. A condition wherein the military retains sufficient power and autonomy, unchecked by professional norms, is simply not compatible with democracy.

⁶¹ Blandon, p. 46.

Military Rating: -.5. In the current context, there are some positive signs of the military obstacle being reduced in Salvadoran democratic society. Nonetheless, there is a lack of civilian control over the military combined with a military that has the autonomy and conviction to intervene in politics when it deems it warranted. As long as this situation exists, there will be a significant obstacle to democracy and democratic stability.

Weighting Factor: 2. The military, as the major holder of weapons of force, possesses the most immediate and overwhelming threat to a democracy via a violent overthrow. Democracy by its nature seeks to limit and constrain the power of the military thus reducing their prerogatives and advantages. The result is the observation made in the first line of this variable: “in most of the countries in our (DLL’s) larger study, democracy has been threatened or overturned by military establishments . . .”. In his research of reverse waves of democratization, Samuel Huntington found that the overwhelming majority of transitions away from democracies took the form of military coups and to a lesser extent executive coups, wherein the head of state unconstitutionally seized control of the country.⁶² The inherent potential threat and historical frequency of the military obstructing the development of democracy makes this a greater than normal factor in democratic stability.

J. INTERNATIONAL FACTORS:

DLL assert that national political regimes and regime changes have been shaped by a variety of international factors. One of these factors is the legacy of colonial rule and

⁶² Huntington, p. 291.

whether it laid a democratic foundation as British colonies often received before being liberated. Demonstration effects which Huntington refers to as snowballing also create a powerful external influence for democratization. External states and organizations also have a conducive effect on democratization through international or regional diplomatic and economic pressures towards democratization. External assistance to advance democratization complements the international pressure in developing democracy. At the extreme end of international influence, the credible threat or actual use of force by a foreign state to maintain democracy in a certain country or region also acts as an obstacle to the breakdown of democracy. A final factor is the general climate of the international environment towards democracy. The weight of the entire global community moving in one general direction such as democratization create significant incentives for a country to conform to the expectation of democracy.

Central America was colonized under Spain and as such El Salvador endures the negative impact of an authoritarian and oligarchic legacy. The wide range of democracy that has recently swept Iberian colonized Latin America would suggest though this legacy is not a major obstacle to democratization and its stability at this point in time. The post-1974 wave of democratization (“Huntington’s Third Wave”) is significant in that it provides the demonstration or snowballing effect which leads other countries to pursue democracy⁶³. The

⁶³ Huntington, p. 46.

elimination of authoritarian regimes in Latin America has provided an example for others and increased national peer pressure to remain democratic.⁶⁴

Probably one of the most important international factors for El Salvador has been the intense diplomatic and economic pressure from the United States. After the Reagan Administration and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States sharply reversed its “counterinsurgency at all costs” approach to a strongly advocated position seeking democratization. The United States began conditioning United States aid to El Salvador on improvements in democratization and elimination of human rights abuses. Given that El Salvador was reliant on the United States for support to maintain its regime, El Salvador responded favorably to this pressure. United States diplomatic and economic pressure was directly responsible for coercing the military to accept the previously unacceptable trial of military officers for the 1989 assassinations of six Jesuit priests. Also it was United States pressure that led the reluctant military to accept the 1992 Peace Accord when the military desired to fight on, to completely eliminate the Left. Adding to the United States diplomatic and economic pressure has been the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and the Roman Catholic Church.

In the realm of external assistance, the United States is the primary donor in this area. The United States through the Agency for International Development (AID) has provided El Salvador with considerable amounts of money and assistance to assist in the development of Salvadoran democracy. The 1996 AID Development Assistance Fund Request for El

⁶⁴ Diamond, Linz and Lipset, pp. 48-52.

Salvador requested 5.5 million dollars to specifically use for bolstering Salvadoran democracy. The objective is pursued through voter registration and other means to increase public participation in national decision-making. Even in the present context of shrinking external aid, there still remain external sources of assistance to help consolidate democracy.

On the coercive side of the spectrum, the United States 1990 invasion of Panama and the 1994-95 near invasion of Haiti stand as credible examples of possible United States reaction to the overthrow of a democratic government in the region. The credible possibility of United States force to restore democracy is an issue that certainly gives the Salvadoran military reason to pause and reconsider military intervention if they begin its contemplation.

Finally, in 1996 the global environment is one which is highly supportive for democracy throughout the world. Marxist alternatives have been largely discredited and the desirability of democracy has repeatedly been affirmed.

International Factors Rating: +1. With the exception of its colonial past, the international factors all stand as highly supportive factors for the development of democratic stability in El Salvador. The negative consequences of the colonial legacy is slight in comparison as evidenced in other democratic transitions and consolidations in Latin America.

Weighting Factor: 1. There is no empirical evidence in general or specifically in the case of El Salvador which shows a causal effect for this variable that is worthy of extra weighting.

V. REVIEW OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The results of the preceding assessment of the ten DLL independent variables in the El Salvador Case Study are presented in table form below:

Independent Variables	Rating	Weight Factor	Weighted Rating
Legitimacy and Performance	.5	2	1
Political Leadership	.5	1	.5
Political Culture	0	1	0
Social Structures and Socioeconomic Development	-1	2	-2
Civil Society	.5	1	.5
State and Society	.5	1	.5
Political Institutions	-.5	1.5	-.75
Ethnic and Regional Conflict	1	1	1
The Military	-.5	2	-1
International Factors	1	1	1
Total Net Rating	+2		+.75
Range of Possible Totals	-10 to 10		-13.5 to 13.5

Table 1. Numerical Ratings of Independent Variables, Individually and Cumulatively.

At first glance these numbers may appear somewhat mundane. Instead they provide an extremely valuable insight into achieving the study's objective of identifying obstacles to the development of democratic stability in El Salvador. The total net rating of unweighted factors is +2 out of a range of -10 to 10. This score would indicate the overall climate for the development of democratic stability is slightly favorable. In comparison, the total net rating of the weighted factors is +.75 in a range of -13.5 to 13.5. This result indicates the

overall weighted climate is slightly less favorable for the development of democratic stability. The importance of this comparison is it reveals that while El Salvador is doing well in many areas of developing democratic stability, it is having problems with the most influential (weighted) of the factors. This accounts for the difference in values in the comparison. This revelation is important for any party who is trying to assist in the creation and consolidation of democratic stability in El Salvador. There are a few, major factors obstructing democratic stability in El Salvador and these factors need to be prudently targeted for reform to have the greatest impact on the desired state of consolidated democracy. As an example, if only the three negative factors were successfully targeted for reform and improved to a .5 rating (partially supportive of developing democratic stability) the overall weighted rating would skyrocket to +7.25, highly supportive of democratic stability. If increasingly limited United States assistance is to achieve the greatest “bang for the buck”, it must be targeted against the crucial variables which have been identified through this study. The empirically-based guidelines for the prioritization of United States assistance is listed below (Table 2), ranked from highest priority to lowest.

Independent Variables	Weighted Rating
Social Structures and Socioeconomic Development	-2
The Military	-1
Political Institutions	-.75
Political Culture	0
Political Leadership	.5
Civil Society	.5
State and Society	.5
International Factors	1
Ethnic and Regional Conflict	1
Legitimacy and Performance	1

Table 2. Prioritized List of Targets for United States Assistance to Achieve Maximum Increase in Conditions Favoring Democratic Consolidation in El Salvador (Highest to Lowest)

This prioritization is not intended as an absolute. As Huntington and Schmitter pointed out earlier there is no absolute path to creating or consolidating democracy. The purpose of this research is to focus on creating a matrix to assess what factors will have the greatest potential impact on achieving democratic stability. This study has acknowledged the political realities in reforming Salvadoran political power structures which must be taken into account. It would be foolish and counterproductive to immediately and radically denude the military of its influence in government and risk military intervention. Instead, the most productive approach must be used to achieve the necessary reform in each factor. If it is impractical or impossible to assist in achieving one factor of reform, then United States

assistance can follow this prioritization to address the next most obstructive factor to maximize United States influence.

Although mentioned earlier, it is worthwhile to remember this research is meant to be dynamic and evolving. Periodic repetition of this approach must be conducted to consistently update the validity of the prioritization and to assess the efficacy of previous assistance efforts.

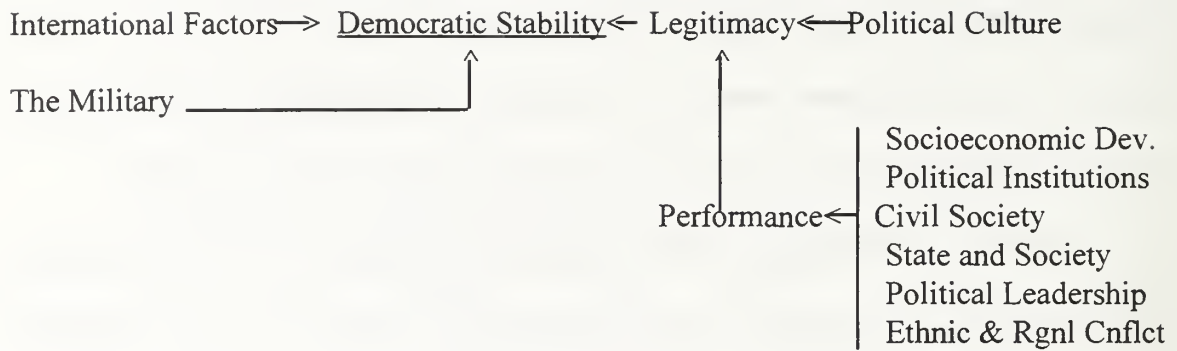
A question raised by this research is its generalizability outside El Salvador. While specific findings of this study may be highly relevant to the historically similar Central American neighbors of El Salvador, it would be counter to the intent of this research. The purpose of the study is to create a country specific, tailored prioritization to assure maximum results for the United States in each case. However, the general approach utilized in this modified DLL approach should be generalizable to any country attempting to develop democratic stability. In particular, it would be highly relevant to Latin America, for the simple reason this region has several new democracies trying to establish firm roots. The results of this research are likewise not restricted for use by the United States in consolidating Salvadoran democracy. They can be used just as effectively by the government of El Salvador in their internal efforts or by other external actors seeking to develop the outcome of democratic stability.

Since this is the first iteration of this modified approach, it is worthwhile to note any insights revealed during the practical application of the new approach. Reviewing previous comments made within the study, the DLL model lacks a rating system and a weighting of

the importance of factors. The rating and weighting system applied in this study seemed to function well although there must be an outright acknowledgment of a certain arbitrary nature to rating factors.

The Political Institutions variable is a rather broad factor which creates the dilemma of combining apples and oranges. In this case, the amount of representation individuals receive through parties and the amount of checks and balances in the various branches of government must somehow be synthesized to create one rating. Important assessments could possibly be lost in the trade-off assessment between sub-factors.

Another difficulty of the DLL theory is there is some overlap between many factors. One condition which exists in a country could be counted under many factors thus grossly exaggerating its actual impact. This is particularly true with the Legitimacy and Performance factor. Legitimacy and performance exist more as causal linkages between some factors and democratic stability than as an independent variable. As stated by DLL, legitimacy is an inherent part of democratic stability. Likewise, performance is an inherent part of legitimacy. Several of the remaining independent variables actually affect democratic stability through legitimacy and performance, as hypothesized in the causal diagram below. This relationship negates legitimacy and performance as an independent variable because in reality it is dependent on other factors already considered.



Perhaps the most significant oversight of the DLL theory is the lack of an independent variable directly addressing the role of the elite acceptance and support for democracy in stabilizing it. John Higley and Richard Gunther have led credible research on the causal nature of elite consensus and convergence to democratic consolidation.⁶⁵ DLL do not disregard the impact of elite support for democracy, since it is an underlying issue in some of their factors. However, the fact it is never directly addressed appears to give it less credit than it warrants. A possible solution to the last two observations would be to replace the Legitimacy and Performance factor with an Elite Support for Democracy factor. Of course no such modification should be accomplished until further testing of this model and research validates doing so.

In the course of this study, we have relied on four empirically supported, fundamental assertions to lay the foundation for maximizing the effectiveness of United States assistance to help develop democratic stability in El Salvador. First, it is in the United States' self-interest to consolidate democratic stability in El Salvador. Second, El Salvador

⁶⁵ HIGLEY, John and Richard Gunther, eds. Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and South Europe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

is a nascent democracy with less than four years of democratic experience. In some respects it is just now finishing its transition to democracy. Third, despite Schwarz's argument that the oligarchs in El Salvador thwart reform, the United States has the ability to positively influence reform in El Salvador as evidenced by past experiences. Finally, the best way to define priorities for United States democratic assistance to El Salvador is through a comprehensive, factual review of the current conditions of factors which are causal in favoring or obstructing the emerging democracy. This task is best accomplished using the DLL theory of democratic stability. The result of this progressive case study is an empirically-based, priority list for United States democratic assistance to El Salvador capable of maximizing the conditions for democratic consolidation. More importantly, using this approach, the United States will no longer have to experience the waste and humiliation of blindly spending vast sums of money and resources on bolstering democracy in developing countries, only to see their efforts result in counterproductive declines in democratic conditions.

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